



Bronwyn Bishop MP

Chairman

House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Family & Human Services

MEDIA RELEASE

8 May 2007

Federal police researchers to give evidence to illicit drug inquiry

The House Families Committee will take evidence from members of the Australian Federal Police tomorrow (9 May) as part of its inquiry into the impact of illicit drugs on families.

Research has shown that the AFP has saved the Australian community billions of dollars in harm through its disruption of illicit drug importations. Approximately \$3.1 billion in harm was saved through seizures by the AFP and its partners between 1998 and 2003, with a further \$1.7 billion saved since then. These calculations represent both tangible and intangible costs to the community, such as labour costs, health care, road accidents, crime, loss of life, pain and suffering.

Dr Michael McFadden, who will appear before the inquiry, has said that identifying the cost of drugs on the community is an important indicator of the effectiveness of AFP drug seizures. Dr McFadden will discuss the AFP's Drug Harm Index with the committee.

Committee Chairman Bronwyn Bishop has welcomed the public hearing and acknowledged the work that the AFP was doing in controlling the scourge of illicit drugs in Australia, saying that "there are terrible costs associated with drugs which cause untold damage to Australian families".

"Families all over the country have been telling us about the social and emotional distress caused by illicit drug use," she said. "There is also the issue of what it is costing them to keep that person clothed, fed, housed and with access to health and treatment services. Removing illicit drugs from Australian streets and homes must be the first priority of Australian drug policy."

The hearing is open to all members of the public.

PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULE

Date: Wednesday 9 May 2007

Time: 10.30 am – 11.30 am

Venue: Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra

Live audio broadcast will be available at <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

For media interview: Please contact Damien Jones on **0409 147 247** at the electorate office of the Committee Chairman the Hon Mrs Bronwyn Bishop MP.

For further information on making a submission: contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4566 or email rhs.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fhs/illicitdrugs/index.htm>