Thursday 6 November, 2008

New Technology Helping Fight Against Drugs

Police Minister Paul Henderson said today he would discuss further measures to help the fight against illicit drugs in the Northern Territory at a police ministers’ meeting in Sydney tomorrow.

Mr Henderson said the ministerial meeting would look at ways to increase Australia’s capacity to get better intelligence and data on the drug trade.

“We need to continually improve the ways we combat drug trafficking and dealing and keep up with the type and amount of drugs entering our community,” Mr Henderson said.

Mr Henderson said the recently released police annual report shows innovative measures such as the establishment of the remote community drug desk and the use of drug detector dogs had been very successful in cracking down on drug dealing in the Territory.

“In the last financial year the amount of drugs seized in the Territory increased by more than 80 per cent compared to the previous financial year,” Mr Henderson said.

“This includes an 86 per cent increase in the amount of cannabis seized and a 46 per cent increase in amphetamines and methamphetamines.

“We all recognise the damage caused by drugs and I’m encouraged that we are stopping more drugs entering the community.

“I congratulate our police force on embracing new measures and for the work they’ve done in achieving these results.”

Mr Henderson said work at the ministerial meeting in Sydney would examine ways to improve Australia’s national forensics capacity to provide better intelligence about the illicit drug trade.

“The Territory will support these measures if it can be shown that it will help us reduce drug related harm in our community.”

The proposal includes:

- A national database of information on the drug trade to provide drug intelligence for police forces;
- A nation forensic capacity for purely intelligence purposes; and
- A national expert capacity, including chemical data analysts to provide drug intelligence that could be used by police forces and for policy development.

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