



COMMUNIQUÉ

Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management 20 November 2019

A meeting of the Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management was held on 20 November 2019 in Adelaide, South Australia. Representatives were present from all Australian jurisdictions, New Zealand and the Australian Local Government Association.

The meeting was chaired by the South Australian Minister for Police, Emergency Services and Correctional Services, the Hon Corey Wingard MP.

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

Preparedness posture for the 2019-20 summer season

The Hon David Littleproud MP, Minister for Water Resources, Drought, Rural Finance, Natural Disaster and Emergency Management, facilitated a discussion with the Council on the national Preparedness Posture and discussed jurisdictional and national plans for the current season.

Australia and New Zealand continue to experience the impact of more frequent and intense disasters, as evidenced in the early start to the bushfire season this year. The Council endorsed a number of initiatives and the continuation of ongoing work in recognition of this ongoing challenge.

Implementation of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework

Ministers noted the draft inaugural National Action Plan to implement the *National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework* and tasked the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee to finalise the National Action Plan as soon as possible.

Ministers also agreed in principle to fully match the Commonwealth's funding commitment of \$130.5 million to support the objectives of the Framework. This will deliver a combined package of \$261 million over the next five years for local, state and national initiatives to reduce the risk and impact of disasters on Australians, and strengthen their resilience in a changing environment.



Public safety mobile broadband

Ministers discussed the importance of all jurisdictions continuing to work together to implement a national public safety mobile broadband (PSMB) capability that meets the needs of their public safety agencies and supports Australia's first responders to protect the community. The Council agreed to continue to prioritise the development and implementation of a PSMB capability for Australia.

National emergency management recovery priorities

Ministers noted the betterment work undertaken through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. Ministers also noted the presentation on the Delegation to the United States on Catastrophic Natural Disasters, and the potential opportunities to improve emergency management of catastrophic disasters in Australia through the work programs of the Australia-New Zealand Emergency Management Committee and the two sub-committees (1) Community Outcomes and Recovery; and (2) Mitigation and Risk.

Mental health in first responders: Health and wellbeing of police and other emergency services workers

Ministers discussed initiatives being undertaken to further a national, collaborative approach to sustaining the mental health of Australia's first responders and emergency services volunteers, and committed to supporting further work in this area.

Illicit Drugs

Ministers agreed on four areas for priority action to ensure national coordination of law enforcement initiatives to address key vulnerabilities and threats facing Australia from the prevalence of illicit drugs:

- i. Aligning national efforts to dismantle the criminal business model by leveraging our understanding of domestic consumption through the National Wastewater Drug Monitoring Program and targeting the supply chain of transnational, serious and organised crime groups.
- ii. Targeting efforts in regional and remote communities impacted by illicit drug use, in particular the destructive drug 'ice' and other amphetamine type stimulants.
- iii. Closing existing loopholes and vulnerabilities being exploited by criminal actors through ensuring national consistency, wherever possible, of controls on precursor chemicals and equipment.
- iv. Leveraging new and emerging technology to overcome existing barriers to information sharing, as well as hardening environments against exploitation by criminal actors utilising encryption and Darknet marketplaces online.



Ministers also agreed to progress discussion of the interaction of law enforcement activities with health, education and prevention initiatives to combat the harms of illicit drugs at a future meeting of the Ministerial Drug and Alcohol Forum.

Ministers agreed to build community awareness of the importance of law enforcement in the war against drugs in an effort to lift community confidence in the policing efforts against the importation and distribution of illicit drugs.

A coordinated approach to firearms issues of national concern

Ministers agreed to a coordinated approach to address firearms-related issues of national significance including the establishment of a national firearms amnesty to be conducted in the second half of 2020.

Firearms – New Zealand’s buy-back programme and legislative reform

Ministers noted the update from New Zealand on the amnesty and buy-back programme, and second phase of legislative reform.

Criminal enforcement of family law personal protection injunctions

Ministers agreed in principle that Federal Family Violence Orders will be recognised on the National Domestic Violence Order Scheme and enforced by state and territory police once Commonwealth criminal offences for breaches of these injunctions commence.

Prohibiting possession of firearms by persons subject to proposed federal family violence orders

Ministers agreed in principle that all jurisdictions would progress legislative amendments to firearms laws to ensure that the issuing of a Federal Family Violence Order against a person will result in the person being prohibited from acquiring, possessing and using a firearm.