

COMMUNIQUÉ – COAG SPECIAL MEETING

The Council of Australian Governments held its 40th meeting today in Sydney. It was a special meeting to reinforce our commitment to act against the threats to our community from violent extremists, family violence and the drug ice.

Counter-terrorism arrangements

COAG was briefed on the current threat environment by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, the Australian Federal Police and the Office of National Assessments, and on the role of the new Commonwealth Counter-Terrorism Coordinator.

Since September last year, there have been two attacks in Australia, we have disrupted a further six attacks and 23 people have been arrested and charged as a result of counter-terrorist operations (equating to almost a third of all terrorism-related arrests since 2001). The national terrorist threat level remains at High: a terrorist attack is likely.

Today, COAG agreed [*Australia's Counter-Terrorism Strategy*](#). The Strategy sets out our coordinated national approach to counter-terrorism to keep all Australians as safe as possible from the threat of terrorism.

First Ministers also agreed a revised National Terrorism Threat Advisory System which informs the public of the threat level and appropriate level of vigilance they need to show. The new system will come into force shortly. It will redefine the threat levels to provide more precision, and provide better information to the public on changes to the national terrorism threat level.

COAG also examined the progress of all jurisdictions in implementing the recommendations of the reviews of Australia's Counter-Terrorism Machinery and the Martin Place Siege. At our next meeting this year, we will discuss in further detail our strategies to counter violent extremism, including online. Governments and communities working together to promote prevention and early intervention with individuals who are radicalising, or at risk of radicalising to violent extremism, is critical to our continued safety.

Reducing Violence against Women and their Children

COAG continued its important work to reduce violence against women and their children. So far in 2015, up to two women a week have been killed. Indigenous women, and women with a disability or from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, can be at much greater risk.

COAG welcomed and accepted the preliminary, high-level advice of its Advisory Panel on Reducing Violence against Women and their Children on areas for national leadership, including that the national campaign, agreed by COAG in April, focus on galvanising the community to change the attitudes of young people to violence. This campaign focus responds to worrying data on young people's attitudes. Currently, for example, one in four young men believes that controlling and violent behaviour is a sign of male strength.

The Commonwealth thanked all jurisdictions for committing joint funding to the campaign. COAG agreed to hear expert advice at its next meeting on the campaign messaging and how

to target it. The campaign will be tailored to address the circumstances in each state and territory.

At its next meeting, COAG will consider options for responding to the Panel's recommendation that programmes be delivered in schools to reinforce the national campaign's messages to young people, supported by quality resources for teachers, parents and students.

COAG will also consider the Panel's advice that governments should explore innovative ways to use technology to keep women safe and prevent perpetrators from reoffending. Too often technology is being used to facilitate abuse against women. There is an opportunity to turn this around and use it instead to keep women and their children safe.

At its next meeting, COAG will consider the Model Law Framework for Domestic Violence Orders and National Perpetrator Standards which are important next steps in addressing violence against women and their children.

National Ice Action Strategy

Ice remains a significant threat to families and communities across Australia, and all governments need to work together to send a strong message that ice is a harmful drug and its use is not acceptable. Ice is a powerful stimulant which causes disproportionate harm to the community – for example drug driving, aggression and violence. This is why the Commonwealth established the National Ice Taskforce to work with the states and territories to develop a National Ice Action Strategy which builds on existing efforts.

The issues surrounding ice use and its impacts are complex. While action will be required across multiple fronts simultaneously, it is particularly critical that existing government efforts in law enforcement and border protection are enhanced to ensure that those doing the worst harms to our communities are stopped, and supply of the drug is contained.

The Taskforce, today, presented its interim report to COAG following extensive consultation with the community and experts from the health, education and law enforcement sectors.

All governments agreed to work with the Taskforce to develop a National Ice Action Strategy for agreement at the next COAG meeting, on the basis of the following six areas for action:

- focusing law enforcement actions;
- targeting primary prevention;
- improving access to early intervention, treatment and support services;
- supporting local communities to respond;
- improving tools for frontline workers; and
- improving and consolidating research and data.

COAG agreed to work together so individuals and families affected by the drug ice have a single point of contact where they can go to receive information, counselling and other support services.

COAG also noted the work currently underway to develop a national cooperative scheme on unexplained wealth, and that this could reduce the financial incentives for organised crime groups involved in the ice trade.

Leaders foreshadowed their intention to discuss at COAG's next meeting progress on work on regulatory issues relating to medicinal cannabis.

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