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JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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Ice Taskforce interim report

Six priority areas for action in the fight against Australia's ice scourge were presented to states and territories at yesterday's Council of Australian Government's (COAG) meeting.

The Prime Minister presented the National Ice Taskforce interim report to COAG, as part of the Australian Government's commitment to the development of a National Ice Strategy.

Consultations undertaken Australia-wide in the last two months has confirmed ice use is ruining individuals, destroying families, and hurting communities.

Sadly, more and more Australians are touched by the ice epidemic every day.

Research shows that Australians use more ice and methamphetamine than any other country – an alarming trend that needs to be reversed.

Furthermore, because of its link to violence, this harmful drug has a much greater impact on the community than other illicit drugs.

The Taskforce, led by Ken Lay APM who was Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police, and supported by Professor Richard Murray and Dr Sally McCarthy received extensive input through 1300 submissions, as well as advice from experts and community members, all of which informed the interim report.

There is no single approach to stop this horrible drug in its tracks but the Taskforce has identified six key areas to guide work toward the development of the National Ice Strategy which include:

- 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.

Governments and communities are already making significant efforts to address the scourge of ice, but clearly it is very important there is national collaborative action to tackle this problem.

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

COAG also endorsed the work currently under way to develop a national cooperative scheme on unexplained wealth, noting this could reduce the financial incentives for organised crime groups involved in the ice trade.

The Taskforce will continue working with the Prime Minister, the Australian National Advisory Council on Alcohol and Drugs, the states and territories and the Australian Local Government Association to develop a final report and strategy to be considered by COAG before the end of the year.

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