



**The Hon Michael Keenan MP**  
**Minister for Justice**

**Senator The Hon Fiona Nash**  
**Assistant Minister for Health**

**JOINT MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Inaugural meeting of the National Ice Taskforce**

The Coalition Government's National Ice Taskforce met for the first time today in Sydney.

Minister for Justice Michael Keenan and Assistant Minister for Health Fiona Nash held initial talks with the Taskforce members prior to the meeting.

The overall purpose of the Taskforce will be to examine all existing efforts to address ice and identify ways to take a systematic, comprehensive and coordinated approach to education, health and law enforcement.

The Prime Minister announced earlier this month that the National Ice Taskforce would be chaired by former Victorian Chief Commissioner of Police Ken Lay APM.

Other members of the taskforce are:

- Professor Richard Murray, Dean of the College of Medicine and Dentistry at James Cook University and former President of the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine; and
- Dr Sally McCarthy, emergency physician and former President of the Australasian College of Emergency Medicine

The Taskforce will consult widely to ensure that all aspects of this menace are being addressed.

Minister Keenan said sadly our nation's growing addiction to this mind-eating, personality-distorting, life-ending drug is paying big dividends to the organised criminal syndicates that are profiting from its misery.

"In recent years we've seen the creep of ice use stretch across the nation, with individuals from all levels of society succumbing to its depravity," Mr Keenan said.

"The Australian Crime Commission considers ice poses the highest risk of all illicit drugs to our community with the rates of its use almost doubling in the last year.

"Despite the efforts of law enforcement we can't arrest our way out of this problem. The demand for ice is attracting international supply and this has been the catalyst for the mounting harm and havoc inflicted on our communities – particularly rural and regional communities."

Minister Nash welcomed both Prof Murray and Dr McCarthy to the Taskforce.

"Both Prof Murray and Dr McCarthy are eminently qualified to be on the taskforce," Minister Nash said.

“Given ice use is such a serious issue in rural and regional communities, I’m particularly pleased to have someone of Prof Murray’s rural and regional credentials on the taskforce as well as someone with Dr McCarthy’s frontline emergency experience.

“Ice affects the whole community and I look forward to input from the entire community as the Taskforce undertakes its research and report, which will identify what’s working and what isn’t in the national approach to ice.

“The Taskforce will talk with experts and the community and these consultations were discussed in our meeting today, with further details to be made available in the near future.”

The Taskforce will continue to meet regularly in the lead up to the delivery of the interim report in mid-2015, with the report to be considered by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in mid-2015. A final Strategy will be put to COAG before the end of 2015.

The facility for professionals and members of the public to make submissions to the National Ice Taskforce can be found at: <http://www.dPMC.gov.au/taskforces/national-ice-taskforce/>

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