



MEDIA RELEASE

“Criminalising drug users just compounds problems for families”

3rd February 2016



“Families can sometimes have so much to deal with when drug use occurs, especially problematic drug use. Having a family member branded a criminal and having to navigate the criminal justice system only makes matters worse.”

Tony Trimingham, CEO and Founder of Family Drug Support and organiser of the National Family Drug Support Day on the 24th February said today.

Recent data from the Australian Crime Commission shows that over 90,000 people were arrested last year for just using drugs across Australia.

The breakdown of these arrests across the country is as follows:

| NSW | VIC | QLD | WA | SA | TAS | ACT | NT |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|-----|-----|
| 21,013 | 16,466 | 28,389 | 13,414 | 11,158 | 1,027 | 492 | 927 |

The most disturbing aspect of these 90,000 people across the country being arrested and charged is that the overwhelming majority are for cannabis use. The harm being done by criminalising so many people is devastating for families as every person being charged, arrested and stigmatised as a criminal has a family forced to endure the long term damage having a criminal record brings.

Mr Trimingham highlighted that *“Families already encounter so much stigma and shame with drug use and the added burden of a criminal record just makes reaching out for help all that more difficult. As a community we must come to the understanding that drug use is a health issue not a criminal issue. To treat people with health problem as criminals is just plain wrong.”*

National Family Drug Support Day is also delighted to announce that access has been provided to host events in Parliament Houses across Australia on the 24th of February to mark the day. This strong showing of Parliamentary support for this new and important National Day will be of enormous benefit and help for many families.

For details of the event and registration go to <http://nationalfdsday.fds.org.au>

For enquiries please contact FDS on 02 47829222 or Tony Trimingham on 0412 414 444

We would also like to acknowledge the vital support of our sponsors and supporters.

- ❖ Indivior
- ❖ Australian Drug Foundation (ADF)
- ❖ We Help Ourselves (WHOS)
- ❖ Ogilvy CommonHealth
- ❖ Damien Trimingham Foundation (DTF)
- ❖ Queensland Government – Mental Health Commission
- ❖ Alcohol & Other Drugs Peak National Network
- ❖ Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association (ATCA)
- ❖ Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA)
- ❖ Australian Injecting & Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL)
- ❖ Drug & Alcohol Multicultural Education Centre (DAMEC)
- ❖ Harm Reduction Australia (HRA)
- ❖ National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)
- ❖ National Indigenous Substance Misuse Council (NISMIC)
- ❖ Pharmacy Guild of Australia (PGA)
- ❖ Scriptwise
- ❖ Palmerston Association
- ❖ Narrabri Shire Council