



Bronwyn Bishop MP

Chairman

House of Representatives Standing Committee on
Family & Human Services

MEDIA RELEASE

22 May 2007

Call for outcomes-based drug treatment funding

Drug policy campaigner the Hon Ann Bressington MLC (SA) will give evidence to the House Families Committee tomorrow as part of their inquiry into the impact of illicit drugs on families.

After experiencing her daughter's drug addiction and the lack of treatment options available, Ms Bressington founded a program called DrugBeat which she ran for 11 years. She was elected as an Independent Member in March 2006 on a platform of drug treatment and policy reform.

Ms Bressington has spoken, from personal experience, of the toll on the families of drug users and the community that surrounds them. She has previously argued against what she believes is a treatment sector focused on harm minimisation and maintenance, rather than treatment of the addict as a whole person who needs to be free of drugs.

'Harm minimisation does not take into consideration that many drug users want to recover', she has told the South Australian Parliament. 'It seems that the value of recovery has been minimised to a point where treatment services that do not support safe use and recreational use of drugs are funded with the crumbs, the left-overs of government money'.

Ms Bressington will be accompanied by Mr Ryan Hidden, an ex-drug user who has been through the program at DrugBeat. Mr Hidden is 19 years old and started smoking marijuana in his early teens before progressing to MDMA and methamphetamines. Mr Hidden will talk about the DrugBeat program and share his story with the committee.

Chairman Bronwyn Bishop welcomed the public hearing. 'This country has one of the highest rates of illicit drug use in the world', she said. 'We need to examine the assumptions we have made to date and ask ourselves whether we are really giving addicts their best chance to live drug-free lives and reconnect with their families and loved ones'.

PUBLIC HEARING SCHEDULE

Date: Wednesday 23 May 2007

Time: 10.15am – 11.30 am

Venue: Committee Room 1R3, Parliament House, Canberra

Live audio broadcast will be available at <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

For media interview: Please contact Damien Jones on **0409 147 247** at the electorate office of the Committee Chairman the Hon Mrs Bronwyn Bishop MP.

For further information on making a submission: contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4566 or email fhs.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fhs/illicitdrugs/index.htm>