



**Police Federation
of Australia**
The National Voice of Policing

The Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
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Inquiry into the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Economic Disruption) Bill 2020

The Police Federation of Australia (PFA) thanks the Committee for the opportunity to make a submission to this Inquiry. As the Committee is aware, the PFA represents the professional and industrial interests of in excess of 64,000 police officers across every police jurisdiction in the country.

The PFA has been a long-term supporter of the use of the Proceeds of Crime Act to target and disrupt serious and organised crime and have been involved in debate and development of legislation around Unexplained Wealth provisions, since 2007. We can think of no better way for those seized funds to be used than to fund further activities and operations across law enforcement and other agencies to continue to target organised criminals seeking to expand their power and wealth. Those criminals have a serious impact on not only the security and well being of the Australian community, but also pose a threat to our economy.

We applaud the Government and commend the support of all parties and cross benchers to continue the bipartisan approach that has existed for many years in enhancing legislation to allow police and other agencies to target these groups and individuals involved in serious and organised crime, both in Australia and overseas. The PFA has always been of the view, that we should 'follow the money' when it comes to the investigation of such matters and we therefore fully support the intent of the Bill.

We give specific support for Schedule 7 of the Bill, providing the Minister with alternative avenues to fund operations of state and territory police forces in activities that are consistent with Section 298 of the *Proceeds of Crime Act 2002*, in particular, for crime prevention and law enforcement measures.

This schedule will allow the Minister, to more expeditiously, fund state and territory police activities and operations in areas of support for the Commonwealth, that might not be strictly seen as a core area of state police responsibility. The PFA is acutely aware of the already competing priorities of state and territory police and the difficulty they often have in being able to provide resources to assist in the investigation, detection and prosecution of criminal activity that might be considered a federal responsibility.

For example, in our recent submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement's Inquiry into Illicit Tobacco, the PFA suggested –

“That the Commonwealth should develop a fund for financing the costs of illicit tobacco operations in the states/territories, with a specific focus on retail sale enforcement. The reason for this is that the Commonwealth gains almost all of the revenue from legal tobacco sales. This will ensure that already stretched state/territory resources will not be diverted from other important policing priorities”.

There are numerous other areas of enhanced law enforcement cooperation that could be fostered through this Bill, including, greater capacity for intelligence gathering, illicit drug trafficking, the cost of which to our society is far greater than just the dollar terms that are applied to its street value, as well as serious fraud and firearms in our communities.

We thank the Committee for the opportunity to make this submission on behalf of Australia's Police. The PFA offers any further support to the Committee that you deem appropriate including appearing to give evidence if requested.

Sincerely yours

Scott Weber
Chief Executive Officer
24 September 2020