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Baker talks tough to cover wasted \$31 million.

SA Police Minister Stephen Baker's announcement that the Liberal Government would be moving to "toughen marijuana laws" is a social tragedy. Like many Australian politicians, Mr Baker feigns ignorance of the unequivocal empirical evidence: the prohibition of drugs has failed, as it did with alcohol.

"Recent revelations that SA's "on-the-spot" fine system costs \$32 million to enforce annually, yet raises only \$1 million in revenue, hasn't reduced levels of use, and criminalise twice as many people in the process, are a social and legal disaster, not to mention a continuing drain on police and court resources." said HEMP SA spokesperson Mr Jamnes Danenberg

Currently, Australia is in the process of developing a national policy on Cannabis through the National Drug Strategy Committee. Mr Baker's proposals are a backward move that directly contradict this policy. In addition Mr Baker shows no understanding or awareness of findings of the Penington Report, "Drugs and The Community"; the SA Legislative Council Select Committee's recommendations, and most importantly, the criteria for a good drug policy, as determined by the Australian Institute of Criminology in the National Cannabis Taskforce monograph "Legislative Options for Cannabis" No.26 (1994).

"HEMP believe Mr Bakers support for prohibition must be questioned. It is not good law enforcement, it is a patent waste of tax payers money and it is demonstrably socially divisive. It is clear criminalising young people for Cannabis use has failed and we can now longer do nothing. When will our politicians grasp the nettle and make decisions for "All Of Us"?" Mr Danenberg said.

For more information or a copy of the Australian Institute of Criminology's 14 point criteria for a good drug policy, please contact Jamnes Danenberg (08) 8297 9442

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