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MEDIA RELEASE
Wednesday, 26 March 2008

ANCD MISSES THE POINT AGAIN

86% of South Australians voted a resounding “YES” to random school drug testing in 2006, according to a Channel 9 survey. When will the people get what they want?

Independent MLC Ann Bressington has slammed a report released today opposing drug-testing in schools by the Australian National Council on Drugs.

Ms Bressington said the ANCD is out of step with the concerns of parents trying to protect their children against addiction.

The ANCD cites the three following reasons for opposing drug testing:

- Insufficient evidence that drug testing works
- The cost of testing
- It would create mistrust between students and teachers

However, Ms Bressington said there was good reason random school drug testing is on the agenda of a number of countries such as Ireland, Scotland, Great Britain, the United States and even South Africa.

There are a number of models that have proven to substantially reduce teenage drug use, such as in Indiana (US) where 98% of principals reported a reduction in the uptake of illicit drug use in schools following testing. There was also a 40% reduction in the number of drug related suspensions once testing started, and teachers said children that had been previously problematic were more able to engage in school projects. 88% of schools voted to have testing continued as an ongoing strategy.

“When the ANCD says there is insufficient evidence, my question is what do they consider to be evidence?” Ms Bressington said.

“Dr Joseph McKinney is a Professor of Education at Ball Uni and his qualifications and research background is extensive. He oversaw the school drug testing strategy and the evidence from this study was dismissed, apparently because Indiana was considered to be “the Bible belt of the United States of America”. The question is, “When is evidence evidence?”

Ms Bressington said in approximately six weeks there will be a new prototype for saliva testing that is guaranteed to cut costs, the most accurate in the world, and can be made available in SA for testing for this trial.

“With the opportunity to have this prototype at our disposal, lets start creating our own evidence and creating our own data,” Ms Bressington said.