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MEDIA RELEASE
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ANN BRESSINGTON INDEPENDENT MLC–
DRUG TREATMENT REFORM.

Since being elected into Parliament in March this year Ann Bressington Independent MLC has been calling for the Government to take action on the antisocial behaviours of individuals and provide appropriate treatment and rehabilitation facilities to deal with the growing meth-amphetamine problem.

In the *City Messenger* on 2 November it was reported that “SA Police Association President, Peter Alexander last week called on the force to equip every officer with taser X26 stun guns.

Research from National Institute on Drugs shows that **meth-amphetamine** users are prone to **violent, delusional and psychotic behaviours** because the drugs alter the brain chemistry with **brain damage** a result of ongoing use of these drugs.

Ann Bressington said:

“With the increase in unprovoked violent attacks over the past 12 months the government must seriously consider the need to provide more treatment and rehabilitation facilities to cope with the growing use of meth-amphetamines. This type of drug is now used as frequently as cannabis (according to 60 minutes Sunday 9th July 2006.) and emergency wards are having to cope with the serious consequences of this drug as well as the wider community being threatened with violent anti-social behaviours. The perpetrator of violent crimes could be our next door neighbour. I have had people contacting my office stating that they are being terrorized by irrational neighbours who they believe are using drugs. In some cases people have put up with this behaviour for 5 years and have had restraining orders in place, but still the police say they are powerless to take further action. One case I know of a person received a 9 month good behaviour bond for his second breach of a

restraining order and the neighbour who took out the order is still living with daily verbal attacks and harassment. People who cannot live within the expectations of the community because of drugs must be removed until they have learnt to adjust their behaviour”

Dealing with **the meth-amphetamine epidemic** will require a co-operative effort between **government, law enforcement, the community and the judicial system.** Many addicts will need to be removed from society for a period of time to undergo treatment and long-term rehabilitation and the facilities available currently are inadequate. There can be a waiting list of up to 6 months for a residential program and as it stands now people have to be detoxified before they can enter. **Meth-amphetamine addicts can recover** from their addiction and become functional members of the community and this takes time, structured programs and appropriately trained staff, all of which are drastically lacking in the current system. **NIDA research** shows that the only proven way for individuals to recover from meth-amphetamine addiction is through **abstinence based recovery** programs because of the serious side effects amphetamines have on the central nervous system and brain function.

Ms. Bressington also said

“The government needs to get tough and introduce monitored treatment programs where individuals are isolated and rehabilitated and currently we have no appropriate facilities available. The onus is falling on families to deal with the behaviours of their drug addicted family members and they do not have the training or expertise to ensure that the needs of the drug addicted are being met. This is a crisis and I am calling for the government to take action now and do what they were elected to do - ensure that the wider community can be safe and secure”.