

MEDIA RELEASE

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Crime Stoppers put spotlight on organised crime syndicates involved in illicit drug trade

“They’ll never know it was you who spoke up.” That’s the message from Crime Stoppers as it promotes its national campaign designed to shine a spotlight on organised crime syndicates involved in the illicit drug trade.

In Bunbury today (12 September), Crime Stoppers WA CEO Dr Vince Hughes said people linked to the illicit drug trade often reach a point where they become concerned for their personal safety or that of their family and look for a way out, and Crime Stoppers gives them a lifeline to anonymously share what they know.

“Because Australians are high consumers of illicit drugs, the trade provides a highly lucrative and profitable market for organised criminal networks such as outlaw motorcycle gangs, cartels, triads and Italian organised crime,” Dr Hughes said.

“In fact, with the illicit drug trade estimated to be worth more than \$10 billion per year, the profits they make are now the lifeblood of their illegal activities. Those profits are often used to fund other illegal activity, including human trafficking and sexual servitude, and much of the violence experienced in Australian suburbs can be directly linked to illicit drug trafficking activity.”

“Our campaign has been funded by the Australian Government through a Proceeds of Crime Act grant, which is using \$3.55 million from seized criminal assets to turn the tables on organised crime and help law enforcement unsettle domestic drug markets and disrupt national and international supply chains.”

This year, Crime Stoppers has partnered with Ports Australia in promoting their National Illicit Drugs Campaign because workers in Australia’s supply chain can often be a specific target for organised crime groups seeking to engage people in criminal activities.

Keith Wilks, Chief Executive Officer of Southern Ports, said the fight against the illegal drug trade was the responsibility of everyone involved in Australia’s supply chain.

“Southern Ports is committed to the highest standards of security within our ports – which extends to working with law enforcement agencies and Crime Stoppers to ensure that our industry is not exploited by organised crime groups.

“By working together, the partnership aims to raise awareness of the danger of the illegal drug trade and provide those who work in and around our port with the tools they need to protect themselves and our community.

“By sharing information with Crime Stoppers, workers can help identify and disrupt the activities of organised crime groups without putting themselves or their families at risk.

“This partnership with Crime Stoppers adds to our existing relationship with Australian Border Force in working with law enforcement agencies to combat illegal trade.

Dr Hughes said Crime Stoppers welcomed the partnership with Southern Ports and commended their commitment to keeping the supply chain industry safe.

“This partnership is an important step in our fight against the illegal drug trade and we encourage all workers in the supply chain to report any suspicious activity to Crime Stoppers, Dr Hughes said.

Independent research commissioned by Crime Stoppers found that drugs remain the number one crime of concern for all Australians, with recent wastewater testing results confirming methylamphetamine, cocaine, MDMA and heroin as the most dominant illicit drugs used in the nation.

“In some way, every Australian family has been impacted by drugs; whether that’s losing a loved one to addiction, the 1 in 10 people who’ve been a victim of an illicit drug-related incident, or indirectly affected because of the significant health and social costs to the community,” WA Police South West District Superintendent Geoff Stewart said.

“We understand some people who may be in, or linked to, the drug trade may not want to deal directly with police. Crime Stoppers provides the perfect option for anyone who has information because they can anonymously share what they know without needing to get involved or risk their own safety,” Supt Stewart said.

The 6-month campaign has been developed in consultation with police, industry groups and other law enforcement agencies, and engages the transport, freight and logistics sectors.

The campaign includes extensive advertising and is being supported by grassroots engagement through a series of community and industry events delivered by Crime Stoppers across Australia.

Anyone with information about illicit drug supply or trafficking can contact Crime Stoppers by calling a toll-free hotline on 1800 333 000 or reporting online at www.crimestoppers.com.au

MEDIA NOTE: Campaign page and videos are <https://crimestoppers.com.au/illicit-drugs/>

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About Crime Stoppers

Crime Stoppers is a highly successful program that has been operating in Australia for 30 years and exists in 25 countries worldwide, where more than 800 programs form the international network. Crime Stoppers Australia Limited, and its national membership, is Australia’s leading not-for-profit, crime prevention and community safety organisation with the responsibility of administering the Crime Stoppers program, in partnership with police agencies, for the purposes of meeting national safety priorities.

About Southern Ports

Southern Ports is a State Government-owned port authority in regional Western Australia. It provides essential infrastructure and services that underpin the state’s growth and prosperity through the management of Western Australia’s three southern regional ports at Albany, Bunbury and Esperance. Collectively its ports handle more than 37 million tonnes of cargo a year, facilitating trade across bulk commodities, containers and cruise operations.