



**Police Federation  
of Australia**

The National Voice of Policing

## **POLICE SUPPORT UNEXPLAINED WEALTH LEGISLATION**

The Police Federation of Australia (PFA) representing Australia's 52,000 police officers has today congratulated the Federal Government on its announcement of Unexplained Wealth legislation being introduced into the Federal Parliament.

PFA CEO Mark Burgess said, "International research clearly identifies 'unexplained wealth declarations' as a new and effective tool against the transnational and national organized crime bosses".

In 1997 the Interpol General Assembly "recognized that unexplained wealth is a legitimate subject of enquiry for law enforcement institutions in their efforts to detect criminal activity and that subject to the fundamental principles of each country's domestic law, legislators should reverse the burden of proof (use the concept of reverse onus) in respect of unexplained wealth".

Mr Burgess said, "There are three very clear objectives from this type of legislation:

- To deter those who contemplate criminal activity by reducing the possibility of them gaining or keeping a profit from that activity;
- To prevent crime by diminishing the capacity of offenders to finance any future criminal activity that they might engage in; and
- To remedy the unjust enrichment of criminals who profit at societies expense."

Unexplained wealth provisions have come about because organised crime bosses continue to operate while the authorities lack evidence to tie their retained wealth to criminal activities. Furthermore, as the burden of proof lies with the authorities, it remains difficult to prove a relationship between unexplained wealth and criminal conduct. Without an effective confiscation system the profit will remain with the organised crime syndicates. This is to the detriment of law abiding citizens and unjustly enriches criminals.

"This legislation will allow police and the courts go after the main attraction to serious and organised crime groups - the money and assets derived from their illegal activities" Mr Burgess said.

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24 June 2009