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The Australian National Council on Drugs, the peak non-government advisory body to Government on drug policy, today applauded the efforts of the Australian Federal Police and the Customs Service on their biggest ever Cocaine haul. This seizure is the culmination of 18 months of surveillance and cooperation from both within, and outside of Australia, representing an important interception of drugs bound for Australian streets.

Chairman of the Council, Major Brian Watters, stated "The Council congratulates the Australian Federal Police and the Customs Service. The reduction of the supply of drugs is an integral part of the Federal Governments Tough on Drugs Strategy, and forms part of a comprehensive package to reduce the impact of drugs on our community. The seizure of 500kgs of cocaine will undoubtedly affect the availability of that drug on our streets".

Major Watters added, "The number and nature of seizures of illicit drugs in the previous 6-12 months highlights the increasing sophistication of our Policing and Customs efforts".

In responding to Major Watters, Mick Palmer, Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police and Deputy-Chairman of the Australian National Council on Drugs, emphasized the importance of working together to address the complex issues of drug use.

"Although the AFP is primarily concerned with reducing the availability, or supply, of drugs in our community, we are very aware that these efforts need to be complimented by work to ensure that the demand for illicit drugs is reduced. It is vital that we work in partnership with organisations that aim to educate and prevent people from commencing drug use, as well as those providing drug dependent people with adequate treatment. This way we can reduce the need for illicit substances and make Australia a less lucrative market for drug traffickers".

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