



*The leading voice in Indigenous drug and alcohol policy advice*

## **National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Committee**

### **AUGUST MEETING COMMUNIQUE 2012**

As part of its commitment to provide high level advice to government, the Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD), with the support of the Australian Government, established the National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Committee (NIDAC).

**NIDAC comprises members from non-government and government organisations with specialist expertise and knowledge from around Australia to provide advice to government on ways to address harmful drug and alcohol (AOD) use amongst Indigenous Australians.**

Committee meetings and consultations with people working with Indigenous drug and alcohol issues are held in a different State or Territory every four months. Through these meetings and consultation forums, NIDAC is able to ensure that the views of the sector are considered as part of its advice.

In August 2012, NIDAC:

- Conducted a community consultation forum in Darwin in the Northern Territory, with people that work to address harmful Indigenous drug and alcohol use, which included presentations from Mr Stephen Gelding (NT Department of Health), Ms Sarah Haythornthwaite (Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance of the NT – AMSANT) and Mr Bernie Dwyer (Association of AOD Agencies NT – AADANT). A welcome to Country was provided by Ms Dorrie-Anne Raymond, on behalf of the Larrakia Nation – traditional custodians of the Darwin region.
- Conducted its regular Members meeting.

#### **NIDAC Consultation Forum**

The forum was attended by around 65 people, with a number of issues being raised for discussion and debate.

Key issues raised included:

- ❖ Concern over the exposure to trauma experienced by Aboriginal people in the 'long grass' in Darwin - a Larrakia Nation study showed that 80% of Aboriginal people living in the 'long grass' experienced trauma.
- ❖ The increasing use of tawny port due to it being cheaply available and concern over the impact it was having on Aboriginal people, families and communities.
- ❖ The need for residential alcohol and other drug rehabilitation services in rural and remote locations and the important role that these services play in addressing the complex needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- ❖ The importance of addressing the social determinants of health and well being in combating harmful alcohol and other drug use.
- ❖ Problems experienced by clients and organisations due to the lack of services and poor integration of available services in urban locations.
- ❖ Service deficit for young people, leading to difficulties in providing early interventions.
- ❖ Concern over kava being brought into the NT from interstate and the impact it is having on individuals, families and communities.
- ❖ Acknowledgment of the newly formed alcohol and other drugs peak body for the NT.

## **NIDAC Meeting**

NIDAC discussed and debated a number of issues at its meeting which included the following:

- ❖ The prioritizing of activities outlined in the NIDAC Strategic Plan for the next 12 month period; this discussion included activities to address the Resolutions developed at the NIDAC 2012 Conference;
- ❖ The draft final report and launch of the Economic Modelling project. This project compares the costs and benefits of addressing problematic Indigenous substance use with treatment as compared to prison. It is anticipated that this report will be released early next year;
- ❖ Discussions on the development of a position statement on the provision of funding to support the Aboriginal community controlled sector to address harmful alcohol and other drug use by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- ❖ An update on the project currently being undertaken by NIDAC on behalf of FaHCSIA which looks at the development of a toolkit and training package to assist in the introduction of alcohol and other substance use management plans in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities;
- ❖ The development of a survey to determine the need for a professional body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AOD workers and organizations;
- ❖ NIDAC's submission and presentation to the Inquiry into the Low Aromatic Fuel Bill 2012;
- ❖ The Royal Assent of the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Act 2012. Information on the Act is available on the Australian Government Com Law Website : [www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/S2012A00100](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/S2012A00100) ;
- ❖ Review of the NIDAC 2012 Conference held in Fremantle in June and discussions on the holding of the next Conference in 2014.

**Next Meeting – Melbourne 21 & 22 November, 2012**

*For information on Indigenous specific alcohol and other drug issues, NIDAC priorities and activities – visit [www.nidac.org.au](http://www.nidac.org.au)*

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