

ANCD welcomes launch of South Australia's diversion program

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The Australian National Council on Drugs, the principal advisory body to Government on drug policy, has expressed its support for the recently announced bi-lateral agreement between the Commonwealth and South Australian Governments, to divert illicit drug users from the criminal justice system to counseling and treatment.

Major Brian Watters, Chair of the Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) stated - "The Council has been very involved in and supportive of the Diversion Initiative since its inception. We have been working with every State and Territory to ensure the community and non-government sector is involved in this initiative, because fundamentally, the ANCD is convinced that a strong non-government sector is vital for communities to deal effectively with drug and alcohol issues."

Mr Scott Wilson, ANCD representative on the reference group, added – "It gives me great pleasure to see this agreement launched today. It is the culmination of a lot of work and mutual commitment by a number of parties, and represents an important illicit drug initiative for this State. This initiative is a demonstration of partnership between government and non-government sectors - across constitutional and political divides - which is extremely encouraging for those of us working in the drug and alcohol field.

As an indigenous person, this initiative is very important for our community, as our people are over-represented in prisons. This initiative should result in more of our people being diverted into treatment, instead of into the criminal justice system."

Major Watters concluded by stating, "The Council would also like to congratulate the

Prime Minister and South Australian Premier for their mutual commitment to this humane and positive response to illicit drug use. "

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The Australian National Council on Drugs is the peak advisory body to Government on drug policy established by the Prime Minister in 1998. (www.ancd.org.au)

Further Inquiries to:

Major Brian Watters, Chairman
0414 780 509

Mr Scott Wilson, ANCD member
0410 419 915

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Mr Gino Vumbaca, Executive Officer

02 6279 1650 or 0408 244 552