

Communique—September 2006

The Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) is the principal advisory body to the Government on drug policy and plays a critical role in ensuring the voice of the community is heard in relation to drug related policies and strategies. A particular priority of the ANCD is to support initiatives that continue to build capacity within the alcohol and other drugs (AOD) sector to facilitate best practice. 

The ANCD consists of representatives from the government and non government drug and alcohol sector from around Australia. Council meetings and consultations with people working with drug and alcohol issues (treatment, research, policing, education etc) are held in a different State and Territory every three months. Through these meetings and consultation forums, the ANCD is able to ensure that the views of the sector, in particular non-government, community-based organisations are considered as part of drug policy advice.

At its September 2006 meeting in Adelaide the ANCD discussed the following issues:

Draft Diversion Principles Paper

The ANCD affirmed its support for the Illicit Drug Diversion Initiative and is involved in the evaluation of this important national program. Independently the ANCD is continuing to develop a Diversion Principles Paper, to advise the Australian Government on the issues that the ANCD believes need to be addressed in any third phase of the Illicit Drug Diversion Initiative. The anticipated recommendations include increased NGO involvement and police participation; reducing recidivism and aiming for consistency across the country have been developed by the ANCD.

NGO Treatment Grants Funding Update

After reviewing the current budgetary allocations for the NGOTGP, the ANCD agreed to advocate for:

- Sustained increases in funding for the NGOTGP from July 2008;
- CPI increases for each year of the NGOTGP
- Support for infrastructure/capital funding
- A more stable funding base

2007 Federal Budget Proposal

The ANCD is finalising its 2007 Federal Budget Submission for consideration by the Australian government. A final paper is expected to be ready by December 2006.

Pharmacotherapy Issues

Given that almost 40,000 Australians are currently receiving pharmacotherapy treatment, the ANCD has decided to commission a report on the current status and issues facing pharmacotherapy treatment programs

in Australia

Meeting with Parliamentary Secretary for Health

The ANCD welcomed the opportunity to meet with the Hon Christopher Pyne, Parliamentary Secretary for Health, to discuss a range of issues affecting and impacting on the AOD sector. The discussion demonstrated the strong understanding and commitment of the Australian Government to address drug and alcohol issues affecting individuals, families, service providers and the broader community.

Amphetamines Type Substances — the Current Situation

After receiving presentations from Senior Police and Health Staff on the current situation concerning methamphetamine use in Australia the ANCD will be commissioning an issues paper on amphetamine type substances in Australia. The paper will be forwarded to government ministers and officials, as well as being released publicly

Asia Pacific Drug Issues

The ANCD commissioned Asia-Pacific Situational Analysis publication will be launched in September 2006. The ANCD will also be having meetings with AusAID to discuss the recent Federal Budget Asia-Pacific Drug Initiative announcement. The ANCD will also be writing to all Pacific Island Country Health Ministers advocating for an extension of the current moratorium of tobacco and alcohol in the Pacific island Countries Free Trade Agreement.

Presentation by Ms Annie Madden (AIVL) and Joanne Bryant (NCHSR)

The ANCD received a presentation on the 1st Stage of the Treatment Service Users Project. The ANCD expressed their support for consumer representation and input into treatment services; and looked forward to receiving further information and updates on the completion of the 1st Stage of the project and implementation of the 2nd Stage of the project.

National Indigenous Drug & Alcohol Committee (NIDAC)

The ANCD & NIDAC Chairs have jointly written to the Association of Petroleum Industry to request a meeting to discuss the Opal fuel roll-out and the role of petroleum producers. At the request of the Prime Minister ANCD & NIDAC will also be commissioning a scoping paper on the current level and breadth of Indigenous AOD services in Australia. NIDAC has also commenced discussions with Australian Liquor Licensing Authorities to ensure appropriate Indigenous input into the processes undertaken by licensing authorities.

School Drug Education

The ANCD has agreed to commission a report on illicit drug detection in schools programs, issues and implications.

'Of Substance' Update

'Of Substance' is an Australian National Council on Drugs initiative and is produced with funding from the Department of Health and Ageing. 'Of Substance' is a free, quarterly magazine. There are currently over 11,000 copies of the magazine in circulation. Also there is a new website for Of Substance www.ofsubstance.org.au which provides access to all copies of the magazine and article search facilities.

Next Meeting

Members were informed that the next meeting will be in Melbourne from the 30th November–1st December 2006. An agency consultation forum will be held before the meeting on the 30th of November.

Conclusion

More information on the Australian National Council on Drugs is available by accessing the ANCD website: www.ancd.org.au or by contacting the ANCD Secretariat: PO Box 1552 Canberra ACT 2601 P 02 62791650 or F 02 62791610.

14–15 September 2006

The ANCD is the principal advisory body to Government on drug and alcohol issues.

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