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In response to the 2005–06 Federal Budget, Commissioner Mick Keelty, Professor Margaret Hamilton & Mr Garth Popple, Co Deputy Chairs of the Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) have stated “We are very pleased that new funding has been announced tonight for illicit and licit drug initiatives. In particular it is pleasing to see additional funds going to assist Indigenous communities and non-government organisations providing treatment. The focus on youth smoking is also very welcome.”

The 2005–06 Federal Budget revealed the following additional

funds:

Extension of the 'Comgas' Scheme to reduce petrol sniffing	\$9.6 million over 4 years
Increasing capacity for Indigenous communities to address substance use	\$8.0 million over 4 years
A National Youth Anti-Smoking Campaign	\$25.0 million over 4 years
Reducing smoking during pregnancy	\$4.3 million over 3 years
Additional Funding for ANCD	\$1.0 million over 3 years
Additional NGO Treatment Grants	\$12.0 million over 2 years
Extension of the National Illicit Drug Campaign	\$0.85 million over 1 year

The ANCD also noted the following announcements:

Youth Mental Health Initiative (inc. co-morbidity issues)	\$69.0 million over 4 years
Termination of the Retractable Needle & Syringe Program	Saving \$51.1 million over 4 years

Whilst the ANCD expressed its support for the announcements, particularly the very appropriate termination of the retractable needle and syringe program — which has been fraught with problems — it did note that some areas of need, particularly in relation to addressing alcohol problems, HIV and hepatitis C transmission amongst injecting drug users and Asia-Pacific Regional drug use issues still required further attention.

In summing up the ANCD view Mr Gino Vumbaca, ANCD Executive Officer said that “It is very pleasing to see the continuance of this Government’s commitment to funding new drug and alcohol initiatives. Of course, as we know, the ANCD members also have a very strong commitment to ensuring that the gains made in recent times, such as reduced drug use and reduced crime, are maintained — and this requires both ongoing funding for existing programs, as well as targeted funding for potential problems. I am sure the ANCD with its enhanced role under this Budget will be vigilant and astute in its advice to government on continuing to address the multitude of needs in communities caused by illicit and licit drug use. Indeed ANCD members are already looking forward to meeting with the Prime Minister, the Treasurer and other Ministers to discuss how best to address these needs in the 2006 Federal Budget.”

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

For further information, please contact:

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