

Major Watters retires as National Council Chairman

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Members of the Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) have today expressed their deep thanks and gratitude to Major Brian Watters AO who has retired from his position as Chair of the ANCD.

The members have wished Major Watters well in his move to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) and have expressed their strong confidence in his ability to contribute greatly to the international efforts to address illicit drug issues. Members were unanimous that the leadership Major Watters has demonstrated over the past seven years as Chair of the ANCD will be sorely missed and have spoken of their full support for the current Co-Deputy Chairs – Commissioner Mick Keelty, Professor Margaret Hamilton and Mr Garth Pople – in maintaining the high standard of work and advice provided by the ANCD, whilst awaiting the appointment of a new ANCD Chair by the Prime Minister.

In leaving Major Brian Watters stated “It has been an honour and privilege to serve as Chair of the ANCD and I’ve greatly enjoyed my time as Chair of the ANCD and will greatly miss working with my fellow members, as well as my many colleagues that work on drug and alcohol issues at community based organisations across Australia. I would also like to thank the Prime Minister, his Ministers and their staff, particularly Mr John Perrin from the Prime Minister’s Office, for their unfailing support and encouragement throughout my time as Chair of the ANCD. The downturn in drug deaths and drug usage since the inception of the ‘Tough on Drugs’ Strategy in 1998 has been very gratifying. It is the result of the commitment and determination of the Australian Government to constructively and humanely seek to deal with the problem. I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of the Department of Health & Ageing Drug Strategy Branch, as well as the myriad of other government departments that have provided significant support for me and the Council. I particularly thank Mr Gino Vumbaca, Executive Officer of the ANCD, and the staff of the ANCD Secretariat for their hard work and loyalty.”

“Finally, I acknowledge the constant and loving support of my wife Margaret throughout my ANCD Chairmanship and career. I look forward to the opportunities afforded by being a member of the INCB and further promoting the Australian approach to drug policy on the international stage. Of course, as members of the Salvation Army both Margaret and I will also continue to serve those in need in our community”

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

For further information, please contact:

Major Brian Watters (ANCD Chairman)

0400 780 509

Mr Gino Vumbaca (ANCD Executive Officer)

0408 244 552

