

National Council commends Victorian Government on its commitment to Diversion Initiative

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The Australian National Council on Drugs, the peak advisory body to Government on drug policy established by the Prime Minister in 1998, has expressed its strong support for the recently announced bi-lateral agreement between the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments, to divert illicit drug users from the criminal justice system to counselling and treatment.

Major Brian Watters, Chair of the Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) stated - "The Council has been 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. The Council would like to particularly acknowledge the work of Professor Margaret Hamilton, who represented the ANCD on the reference group who has contributed to the development of this impressive agreement."

Major Watters added "It gives me great pleasure to see that the Victorian Government is not only making a significant contribution to the funding that the Federal Government is providing for Diversion, but is displaying its support for the initiative by having developed such a comprehensive and well thought out program. This spirit of co-operation and partnership to achieve positive changes; across constitutional and political divides, is extremely encouraging for those of us working with people affected by drug use, as well as their families and loved ones. The Council would also like to congratulate the Prime Minister and Victorian Premier for their mutual commitment to this humane and positive response to illicit drug use.

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