

National Council meets in Adelaide

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The Australian National Council on Drugs, the peak non-government advisory body to Government on drug policy established by the Prime Minister in March 1998, is meeting in Adelaide today.

The meeting was officially opened by the Hon Dean Brown MP, Minister for Human Services and included an open discussion with members of the Council on the South Australian approach to dealing with drug issues.

Chairman of the Council, Major Brian Watters, stated "The Council was very impressed with the work being done in South Australia and the commitment of the Government to addressing the many issues concerning drug use."

Major Watters added - "Today, Council members will also discuss many of the issues that appear to have been raised in the recent South Australian Parliamentary Inquiry into Drug Use. In particular, the Council will be discussing the tragic waste of life caused by fatal heroin overdoses with a view to developing and promoting an informed position that will make a difference on this matter. We will also be looking at ways to increase our support for evidence based treatments that effectively deal with drug use."

Mr Scott Wilson, a South Australian member of the Council also confirmed that the Council had met with a number of local agencies in an open consultation forum to discuss issues that affect those working in drug and alcohol services in South Australia. Mr Wilson stated - "A number of local non-government agencies, as well as some government and law enforcement agencies were represented at the forum. The Council members listened to the Local issues and concerns of the people of South Australia. The Council is taking its responsibility for representing the views of the non-government sector and the community at the highest levels of drug policy very seriously."

Mr Gino Vumbaca, Executive Officer for the Council added that - "the Council will also be discussing ways to maintain their ongoing and high level involvement in the recently launched Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Diversion Initiative. This Initiative is strongly supported by the ANCD because it aims to divert drug use offenders from the criminal justice system to the treatment sector."

9 December 1999

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