

National Council support for top end drug policy

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The Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) has thrown its considerable support behind the Northern Territory Government announcement to implement a range of programs to address drug use.

Major Brian Watters, Chairman of the ANCD stated “the ANCD has been working closely with the Northern Territory Government since it came to office last year and is very pleased to see the introduction of a range of programs to reduce and treat drug use.”

Major Watters added “for too long the Northern Territory has been in a form of denial over the level of illicit drug use that occurs and this has meant that many communities in the Northern Territory have been struggling to effectively deal with drug issues without adequate resources or options in place. The availability of methadone, naltrexone and buprenorphine, as well as support programs and a 24 hour hotline will start to bring the Northern Territory into line with the rest of the country.”

Professor Margaret Hamilton, Executive Member of the ANCD, and member of the Northern Territory Illicit Drugs Taskforce stated “there is little doubt that drug services have been neglected in the Northern Territory over the years and this attempt to redress the situation by the Government is very welcome. Of course whilst the focus is very much on problematic use of opiates at this stage, there are many issues for the Northern Territory people to deal with in the future, including having the country’s highest per capita rates of alcohol, tobacco and cannabis consumption, so this has to be seen as the first step in a long process to provide a range of necessary services and programs.”

Major Watters concluded by stating “whilst the ANCD is very supportive of the advances announced we will also be continuing to advocate for a greater involvement of the non-government sector and the introduction of Indigenous services that are supported by Indigenous communities.”

Mr Nick Gill, the Northern Territory based member of the ANCD (and also a member of the Northern Territory Illicit Drugs Taskforce) joined Major Watters and Professor Hamilton in taking the opportunity to express their strong support in the ability of the Northern Territory Minister for Health & Community Services, Jane Aagaard to keep drug and alcohol issues at the forefront of Northern Territory government funding decisions.

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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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Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) - National Council support for top end drug policy

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