

National Council welcomes focus on Indigenous substance misuse issues by community controlled organisations

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The Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD), the peak advisory body to Government on drug policy established by the Prime Minister in 1998, has expressed its strong support for the increased focus on Indigenous substance misuse issues.

The Chair of the ANCD Major Brian Watters applauded the launch of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (NACCHO) Substance Misuse Strategic Plan, especially its collaborative nature and the recognition by the Chair Mr Puggy Hunter on the need for NACCHO to build partnerships.

Major Watters said "The NACCHO strategy acknowledges the importance of local communities developing the means to address their own substance misuse problems. The Council supports the strategy, as it recognises the many social and economic factors that lead to these problems. Together with the newly established National Indigenous Substance Misuse Council (NISMIC), the new peak body for Indigenous Community Controlled Substance Misuse Services, a broader approach to indigenous substance misuse issues should now be possible. The ANCD is also pleased that the many requests for culturally appropriate services by our Indigenous representative, Mr Scott Wilson (who is also chair of NISMIC) will be facilitated by these two groups working together".

Major Watters added "Having met with representatives from these organisations I am confident that we will start to see some real commitment to achieving changes at the community level. It is very heartening to see these partnerships form and to see a focus on holistic practice. We must always remember that it is the whole person and the community that is important, rather than just focussing on the effects of individual drugs. I can assure you that the Council will work hard to support their endeavours."

Major Watters also took the opportunity to reaffirm both his personal commitment and that of the Council to assist in addressing substance misuse issues and their effects on Indigenous people, in all their environments, be it urban, rural or remote.

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