

The 2008 Federal Budget— 13 May 2008

The Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) has welcomed the Federal Government's announcement of funding for a range of drug and alcohol and related issues in its 2008–09 Budget. 

Dr John Herron, the Chairman of the ANCD stated “The ANCD is very pleased that significant funding to address alcohol issues, Indigenous health inequality and law enforcement roles has been announced. It also is very pleasing to see commitments targeting young people and sporting organisations. The budget clearly reflects the balanced and pragmatic approach to addressing drug and alcohol issues in Australia that has been so successful for many years. Indeed, the ANCD will continue to work closely with the new Government to ensure that these new initiatives complement all the gains made to date by the many and effective current programs that make up the National Drug Strategy.”

The 2008–09 Federal Budget revealed the following funding:

National Binge Drinking Strategy

\$53.5 million over 4 years to reduce binge drinking and its associated harms around the nation — from existing funding.

‘Alcopops’ Legislative Change

An increase in the excise and exciseequivalent customs duty rate applying to ‘other excisable beverages not exceeding 10 per cent by volume of alcohol’ from \$39.36 per litre of alcohol content to the full strength spirits rate of \$66.67 per litre of alcohol content on and from 27 April 2008.

Closing the Gap in Indigenous Health

\$49.3 million over 4 years through COAG to improve access to drug and alcohol services — this doubles the previous 2006 COAG commitment — new funding

\$14.5 million over 4 years in the Indigenous Tobacco Control Initiative to help tackle high rates of smoking in Indigenous communities — from existing funding

\$9.8 million for 22 remote communities to receive support and assistance from a local Aboriginal family and community worker and/or a safe house and a mobile child-protection team based in Darwin will continue to support families in remote communities

\$9.5 million for alcohol diversionary activities for young people between 12 and 18 years offering a range of safe and healthy alternatives to drinking and other substance abuse

Additional Funding for the National Tobacco Strategy

\$15.0 million over 4 years to help reduce the health problems caused by smoking and to reduce smoking

rates among young people — new funding

Illicit Drug Use National Education Strategy — targeting people using methamphetamines

A national education and marketing strategy to encourage 'ice' users to quit — from existing funding

Links Between Drug Use and Mental Illness Community Campaign

\$9.7 million in savings expected

National Psychostimulants Initiative

\$4.0 million in savings expected

RecLink Program

\$2.3 million over 4 years to improve the lives and opportunities for Australians suffering from drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, social discrimination and homelessness — new funding.

Model Code of Conduct for National Sporting Organisations

\$20.1 million over 4 years to implement a model framework and code of conduct for national sporting organisations to address the issue of illicit drug use by athletes — from existing funding.

National Advisory Council on Mental Health

To be established from existing funding

Mental Health Nurses Training Subsidy

\$35.0 million over 4 years to increase the number and value of postgraduate mental health nurse and psychology scholarships — new funding.

Night Patrols

A total of \$17.7 million has been allocated for community night patrols over the 2008–2009 financial year. Night patrols to make remote Indigenous communities safer and more secure for families and children will continue as part of the Australian Government's commitment to implementing the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER). The additional funding will enable the continued operation of night patrol services in the 73 communities covered by the NTER.

Australian Federal Police

The AFP will receive funding of \$47.0 million to deploy additional sworn members to assist in capacity building and narcotic roles in Afghanistan.

The deployment of 66 additional Australian Federal Police as part of the NTER.

Australian Crime Commission

The Australian Crime Commission will receive a further \$4.2 million to continue the work of the National Indigenous Violence and Child Abuse Intelligence Task Force

Customs

Australia's port security and border protection capabilities will be strengthened by \$16.0 million over the next four years to increase its container examination capacity at four key regional seaports. Funding will be provided to assist in the identification and interception of illegal and potentially dangerous goods.

In summing up tonight's Federal Budget the ANCD Executive Director, Mr Vumbaca said

“the budget certainly has covered some gaps in our approach to problems caused by alcohol and starts to address the treatment access issues facing some Indigenous communities. The targeting of specific funding to our most disenfranchised, such as the homeless and the mentally ill is also very welcome. The ANCD will now work to ensure that governments and communities also provide the necessary resources and support for the sector for effective existing programs that will continue to assist us in addressing the many challenges that we will face in the future both in Australia and regionally”

13 May 2008

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

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