

Top end families high on National Council's agenda

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During its recent meeting in Darwin, the Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) was once again reminded of the impact that alcohol and other drugs (AOD) have on the family.

Chairman of the ANCD, Major Brian Watters AO stated, "During regular consultations around Australia, I and other members of the ANCD hear time and time again about the plight of families who are currently dealing with the adverse effects of drug and alcohol use. During our time in Darwin, the ANCD heard similar stories, and in particular some of the pressing issues facing Indigenous families."

Continuing, Major Watters said, "The abuse of substances, be they licit or illicit, by family members is a serious problem for the Australian community and it is one which we need to continue to address. It is essential that we as a community deal with the broader, structural issues that lead to substance abuse. However, to do this successfully it is critical that all the key players, such as governments, the non-government organisation sector and local communities work collaboratively to break down the 'silos' that can impede this process."

Mr Nick Gill, Director of the Drug & Alcohol Services Association in Alice Springs & ANCD member said, "On the ANCD we are cognisant of the many drug and alcohol issues facing families, and at its Darwin meeting a financial commitment to conduct research in this area was overwhelmingly endorsed by the membership. In broad terms the ANCD will be focussing on two issues, that is, multigenerational drug use, as well as the support needs of families/carers of drug users."

Turning to the issue of treatment, on hearing during an agency forum that the Northern Territory's pharmacotherapy program is now up and running, the ANCD congratulated the Northern Territory Government on its introduction of a range of drug and alcohol initiatives for those people seeking assistance. The ANCD has always advocated that the most effective treatment system is one that provides a range of options that cater to the needs and circumstances of the individual at the time of seeking help.

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

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