

ANCD Work Plan 2011 – 2014

VISION

An Australia with an innovative, integrated and evidence informed approach to drug and alcohol use that is effective, engages the community, and is humane in its approach.

BACKGROUND

The ANCD is the principal advisory body to the Prime Minister and the Federal Government on drug and alcohol policy and plays a critical role in ensuring the views of the many sectors involved in addressing drug and alcohol problems, as well as the community are heard. The ANCD provides independent, strategic advice on priorities for policy development, emerging licit and illicit drug use issues and measures by which these can be addressed. An important component of the ANCD's work is to also ensure that policies, strategies and directions in the drug and alcohol field are consistent with its vision, the most current evidence and the National Drug Strategy.

The ANCD was established by the Prime Minister in 1998 as part of the Federal Government's response to reduce the harm caused by drugs in our community. The ANCD membership consists of members from both the non-government and government drug, alcohol and related sectors including treatment, medicine, research, law enforcement, Indigenous health, local government, education, mental health, consumers, and the magistracy from around Australia. It is through this diverse membership, that the ANCD has the capacity to access an extensive range of expertise throughout the sector and the community.

TERMS OF REFERENCE 2011-2014

- a. Provide independent advice to the Prime Minister and Australian Government Ministers on national drug and alcohol strategies, policies, programmes and emerging issues.
- b. Provide independent advice to the Prime Minister and the Australian Government on improving the implementation and effectiveness of efforts to reduce the supply, demand and harm from drugs in Australia and internationally.
- c. Provide independent and strategic advice to the Prime Minister and Australian Government Ministers on drug and alcohol issues specifically affecting Indigenous people.
- d. Provide assistance and advice on drug policy and services to Australian Government departments, inquiries and other bodies such as parliamentary parties, as appropriate.
- e. Consult and liaise with relevant sectors and in particular the non-government sector on drug and alcohol related issues.
- f. Inform and educate relevant sectors and the general public's knowledge on drug and alcohol related issues.
- g. Build and maintain partnerships across the range of sectors concerned in dealing with and addressing drug related issues.
- h. Work closely with the Inter-governmental Committee on Drugs and other National Drug Strategy partners to develop and implement effective strategies, policies and programmes to reduce the uptake and misuse of illicit and licit drugs.
- i. Maintain effective liaison with other stakeholders, public health advisory bodies and relevant peak non-government organisations, including consumer representatives.
- j. Develop a three year Work Plan for the Council.
- k. Report annually to the Prime Minister on the work of the Council.

PRINCIPLES

To achieve its vision the ANCD has developed a core set of principles to guide its deliberations and development of advice to government and the wider community.

These are as follows:

1. Promoting and achieving balance in support and funding for supply, demand and harm reduction policies and programs;
2. Ensuring evidence informs and underpins advice but does not hamper innovation;
3. Promoting responses that are effective and sustainable;
4. Involving consumers, families and affected community members in the development of advice;
5. Enhancing the lives of disadvantaged and disenfranchised members of our community;
6. Increasing access to assistance and treatment;
7. Reducing both the stigma & marginalization of affected communities and individuals;
8. Promoting the benefits of collaboration with organizations and individuals across the range of sectors addressing drug and alcohol issues;
9. Treating the varied views and opinions on addressing drug and alcohol issues with respect.

ANCD BROAD PRIORITY AREAS & TARGETS

The ANCD recognises that there are many areas of need and concern that require attention to fulfil its vision. The ANCD also recognises the challenges in adequately addressing all these areas within a 3 year timeframe. As a result, the ANCD has identified four broad categories that contain a number of specific priority areas and related actions upon which the ANCD will be focussed. The ANCD acknowledges that some priorities and actions identified may overlap; and that there will be a need to focus on addressing new issues as they emerge.

These four broad categories are:

Population

The ANCD intends to focus on individuals, subcultures, communities and the overall population, taking into account the different patterns of drug and alcohol use that occur, the differing vulnerabilities faced, the varying needs across different life stages and the differing access to assistance and interventions.

Drugs

The ANCD recognises the broad range of drugs used in Australia, which include alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances, illicit drugs and pharmaceuticals. It also recognises that the National Drug Strategy has specific sub-strategies for some drugs in development. Addressing some of the particular harmful aspects of specific drugs must be undertaken with an understanding of the polydrug use that occurs for most people.

Systems & Services

The ANCD recognises the complex nature of services and pathways that needs to be provided by the AOD system. It also recognises that the AOD system would be greatly enhanced by increased participation of consumers and their families, an increased use and understanding of technology, increased investment in staff development and the development of agreed standards of service and care together with greater clarity of the sector's particular contribution to integrated care for people affected by drug use.

Emerging Trends

The drug and alcohol arena is constantly changing in terms of types of drugs available and patterns of use. Ensuring there are evidence informed and innovative approaches taken to address these issues is critical in reducing the harmful impacts from drug and alcohol use on individuals, families and communities.

Category 1 – Populations

Specific Priority Areas

Focus and Actions

1. Young People

Adolescence and young adulthood is a time where the opportunity for drug and alcohol use can occur for the first time. Young people may be particularly vulnerable to some harms including harm to the developing brain.

1. Encourage better understanding of young people's experiences and views so this can be meaningfully included in advice regarding policy and program responses
2. Support efforts to prevent and delay the uptake of drug and alcohol use through innovative communication and support for preventative activities

2. People who are unemployed

Unemployment can be both a cause and a consequence of problematic drug and alcohol use. Promoting meaningful employment and other participation in community is a vital component of effective and sustainable social inclusion.

3. Advocate for the role of AOD services in increasing employment participation and increasing employers engagement of people from AOD services
4. Identify and work to reducing barriers to employment
5. Poverty and disadvantage associated with unemployment can exacerbate risks associated with alcohol and other drug use.

3. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are identified as disadvantaged in a number of measurable health, social, welfare and economic indicators. The substantial over-representation of Indigenous people in the justice and corrections system, as well as the life expectancy gap, are clear indicators of the significant impacts of problematic drug and alcohol use.

6. Support efforts to close the gap in relation to a range of social determinants of health
7. Support efforts to close the gap in relation to drug and alcohol related harms

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Support efforts to reduce the high rate of incarceration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples 9. Support the priorities identified by the ANCD's National Indigenous Drug & Alcohol Committee (NIDAC)
<p>4. People with Complex Needs</p> <p>Problematic drug and alcohol use tends to co-occur with other indicators of disadvantage, including homelessness, mental illness, poverty, poor physical health, family break-down, and crime. It is important that policies and programs across these areas of need and service delivery are integrated and co-ordinated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Provide input into complex needs policy frameworks and funding models that are developed 11. Advocate for greater engagement of correctional services (Federal and State) in the broader AOD strategy 12. Strengthen partnerships (including highlighting the expertise of the AOD sector) with Mental Health and Homelessness Services

Category 2 – Drugs

Specific Priority Areas	Focus & Actions
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<p>5. Alcohol</p> <p>Alcohol use has been an area of concern in Australia for many years. Its social, health and economic costs to Australian society are well documented, as is its historical place in Australian culture and lifestyle. Research has established many areas for the most effective policy and program responses ; however this continues to be contested among competing and vested interests.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Advocate and support evidence based policies that are known to be effective in the area of supply and availability, such as pricing, advertising and liquor licensing 14. Advocate for the availability of data, especially on alcohol sales to inform effective policy and other responses 15. Address the particular risks of drinking among young people 16. Develop a better understanding of the treatment pathways and gaps in services for people with alcohol problems 17. Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations of the Pacific Drug and Alcohol Research network
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<p>6. Opioids</p> <p>Opioids, from street heroin to pharmaceuticals, have been a consistent contributor to harm, disadvantage and crime in Australia. Their beneficial use for medical purposes is also well known. As a result, it is a complex area of policy as the use of these drugs can also range from licit to illicit, and is associated with the potential for dependence and greater harms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Contribute to efforts to further reduce the levels of opiate related overdoses 19. Advocate for the increase in availability and access to effective and innovative treatment for opioid dependence 20. Support the implementation of the recommendations of the National Strategy for the Misuse of Pharmaceutical Drugs 21. Advocate for the increased availability of appropriate opiates for medical use internationally
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7. Cannabis

Cannabis is the most widely used illicit drug. After a period of decline, recent data indicated a potential increase in cannabis use. Changes in usage patterns, increased availability of research on the potential harms from cannabis use, the continuing high numbers of people arrested for cannabis offences and the role of medicinal use of cannabis all contribute to the need for a focus on the complex policy and program context of this drug.

22. Advocate for well resourced, enduring investment in cannabis prevention strategies
23. Address the particular risks of early onset heavy cannabis use and the risks of regular heavy use
24. Enhance access to effective brief interventions and treatment
25. Enhance the provision of quality support and advice to parents
26. Promote greater transparency and, where appropriate, an increase in the availability of cannabis diversion programs
27. Support the development of a national position of the use of cannabis for medical purposes
28. Support exploration of the principle of proportionality in relation to the consequences of cannabis use within the justice system

8. Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS)

The use of ATS appears to be becoming more common in Australia and in the Asian region. The ease with which ATS can be produced and the increase in the number of clandestine ATS laboratories, as well as larger production facilities in nearby countries over the past decade indicates that ATS is likely to continue as a serious concern for Australia and our neighbours.

29. Enhance treatment access, engagement and retention for people with problematic or dependent use of ATS.
30. Support the priorities identified by the ANCD's Asia-Pacific Drug Issues Committee (APDIC)

Category 3 - Systems & Services

Specific Priority Areas

Focus & Actions

9. Research, Information and Evidence

Securing timely, accurate, and objective data about the prevalence of drug and alcohol use is critical in ensuring that responses are appropriately targeted, timed, and cost-effective. The availability of all data for analysis is indeed a fundamental requirement for good public policy. In addition, investment to ensure a strong, vibrant, and sustainable research sector producing high-quality research is another necessary component of developing efficacious responses and good public policy.

31. Promote the broader engagement of consumers and service providers in the development of policy, programs and research agendas
32. Promote a commitment to significant AOD research funding including the transparent commissioning of research and partnership approaches
33. Advocate for access to all publicly funded data and information

10. Accreditation, Funding & Workforce Development

Quality services and assurance is fundamental to providing the highest standard of interventions to reduce the harms caused by drug and alcohol use. To ensure public confidence, and encourage greater investment, the drug and alcohol sector requires a more accessible, appropriate and well funded system to encompass accreditation of services and of workers.

The constraints on government funding are well documented, however, unlike other comparable countries; Australia does not possess a strong culture of philanthropy and there may be potential to engage private sector investment.

A well trained, appropriately resourced, and engaged workforce is necessary to ensure the provision of high-quality evidence-based interventions. Whilst there has been a stated focus on workforce development in recent years the necessary investment has been lacking to develop an integrated national approach to workforce training and development.

34. Advocate for continued, stable and significant funding for the diverse range of effective AOD services including treatment and harm reduction.
35. Actively participate in the emerging quality frameworks and funding models being developed in the AOD area.
36. Advocate for increased investment in the capacity, qualifications and skills of the AOD workforce and particularly the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.
37. Promote the AOD sector as a specialist service sector
38. Ensure the development of quality workforce and organisational development of services and professions that respond to alcohol and other drug problems, including law enforcement, health staff, child protection services, housing and others.

<p>11. Screening & Brief Interventions</p> <p>During a time of widespread health reform, there is a need to better identify the role drug and alcohol treatment services plays and the best fit for them within Australia's new hospital and primary health care systems.</p> <p>Drug and alcohol use is a substantial contributor to emergency department presentations and hospitalisations. This provides a real opportunity for screening and brief interventions with people with problematic drug and alcohol use. Such a process that included referral to appropriate services could generate substantial cost-savings for hospitals and the community.</p>	<p>39. Assist in identifying the role and place of drug and alcohol treatment services within Australia's new primary health systems.</p> <p>40. Advocate for drug and alcohol screening and brief interventions program in all hospitals and primary health care clinics</p>
<p>12. Services Integration</p> <p>There are real benefits from the potential linking of services within the current reforms occurring in the mental health sector and other relevant sectors.</p>	<p>41. Develop appropriate advice on enhancing service integration and linkages to family services, mental health services and homelessness services.</p>
<p>13. Consumers</p> <p>The important role of consumers in determining need, potential responses and effectiveness is well documented. This participation needs to occur at the service level as well as at the leadership, research, policy, advocacy and education and training levels.</p>	<p>42. Advocate for greater acceptance and engagement of consumer participation as a core component in AOD research, policy, and programs.</p>

Category 4 - Emerging trends

Specific Priority Areas	Focus & Actions
<p>14. New and Emerging Drug Issues</p> <p>New drugs are increasingly entering the international and Australian markets. Although regularly sold and promoted as safe and legal, there is often little known about these drugs, including the risks and harms associated with their use. Current legislative responses to addressing the issues with these drugs are reactive and thus at times slow and inadequate.</p>	<p>43. Support the consideration of innovative approaches to meet the challenges of new drugs, and different distribution networks</p> <p>44. Participate in developing comprehensive and effective responses to new drugs as they emerge.</p>
<p>15. Families and Children</p> <p>Often the focus of drug and alcohol services and policies is the individual drug or alcohol user presenting with the problem. There needs to be a more proactive response to the impact of drug and alcohol use by an individual on their families; especially on children.</p>	<p>45. Continue the contribution to the government's and public understanding of drug and alcohol issues and responses for families and children, with a particular focus on the early years of childhood.</p> <p>46. Facilitate the development of improved, evidence informed policies, programs, and guidelines that recognise responsibilities and approaches to the complex mix of infant, children, child protection and AOD services</p>
<p>16. Older People</p> <p>As Australia's population ages, there is a growing body of evidence both internationally and here that older people using drugs and alcohol have limited age-appropriate services.. The focus on young people is understandable but there needs to be a far greater recognition of the problems faced by older people.</p>	<p>47. Encourage greater examination and analysis of the apparent increasing numbers of older people presenting in acute and general health setting with drug and alcohol problems.</p> <p>48. Support the identification of AOD specialist responses and services for older people with drug and alcohol problems.</p>

<p>17. Technology & E-Health</p> <p>Nearly every sector, including the AOD sector needs to assess and understand the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities that new technology provides.</p> <p>Electronic sources of health information and data, and the provision of treatment and other services has the potential to make the Australian drug and alcohol sector far more efficient, accessible and available in the future.</p>	<p>49. Encourage examination of appropriate drug and alcohol related guidelines within the new social media that identifies both risks and opportunities for the AOD sector</p> <p>50. Encourage the assessment of opportunities provided by new technology and the on-line presence of AOD services</p> <p>51. Support discussion of the challenges and opportunities in progressing the establishment of e-health in Australia's drug and alcohol sector</p>
<p>18. Culture, Sexuality & Disability</p> <p>There are many groups that are adversely affected by drug and alcohol use such as people from different cultures and races, gay, lesbian and transgender people and those with disabilities such as alcohol acquired brain injury and FASD. Ensuring equality of access to services for all groups is a core component of a comprehensive and effective response to drug and alcohol use.</p>	<p>52. Advocate for the development of appropriate policies, programs and funding to ensure people from a range of affected and often 'hidden' groups have their specific drug and alcohol issues recognised and addressed.</p>

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS DRUG & ALCOHOL COMMITTEE (NIDAC)

NIDAC is a committee of the ANCD (with external Indigenous membership) that has established itself as the leading voice on Indigenous drug and alcohol policy. Its particular focus is to reduce drug and alcohol use problems and the associated harms in Indigenous communities nationally. It provides advice to government based on its collective expertise and experience, as well as through consultation with those working in the field, various stakeholders and relevant experts. It advises on a range of drug and alcohol issues that impact on Indigenous communities and Indigenous Australians.

ASIA-PACIFIC DRUG ISSUES COMMITTEE (APDIC)

APDIC is a committee of the ANCD (with external expert membership) that advises on ways to maximise Australia's response, leadership and impact on Asian-Pacific Regional drug issues. This includes advice on the most appropriate ways to work with our regional neighbours and to share knowledge and understanding about successful strategies to address drug and alcohol use. In particular, there is a focus on building the capacity within the region.

OF SUBSTANCE – NATIONAL ALCOHOL, TOBACCO & OTHER DRUG MAGAZINE

Of Substance is a free magazine that addresses alcohol, tobacco and other drug (ATOD) issues and problems in Australia today. It publishes three editions per year and is supplemented by the release of electronic bulletins throughout the year. It is auspiced by the ANCD but operates independently with its own Board and Editorial Reference Group to steer its development and content. The magazine's primary audience is frontline workers in the drug and alcohol sector. However, it is highly relevant to individuals and organisations from many related sectors including health professionals, social workers, educators, researchers, law enforcers and policy-makers. Written in plain English, *Of Substance* reports on the latest news and research in the field; regional, national and international data and trends; and a range of skills and techniques for best practice treatment.

LINKAGES AND PARTNERSHIPS

As identified within the principles section of the Work Plan the importance of collaborating and working with other key sectors is vital to developing comprehensive responses to addressing drug and alcohol issues. The priority areas identified for this term are as follows:

- Federal, State and Territory Governments via the Intergovernmental Committee on Drugs (IGCD)
- Local Government
- Consumers
- Families and Carers
- Non Government and Not for Profit Sector
- Indigenous Health Sector
- Mental Health Sector
- Homelessness Sector
- Criminal Justice Sector
- Youth Sector
- Education Sector
- International Agencies
- Media