



ACT develops Australian first toolkit to address harmful alcohol and drug use and domestic and family violence

Minister for Health and Wellbeing Meegan Fitzharris and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence Yvette Berry joined important stakeholders today to launch the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT's (ATODA) co-designed comprehensive toolkit which will provide clinical and practical guidance for people who work in the alcohol and drug sector to prevent and respond to domestic and family violence.

ATODA CEO, Carrie Fowlie said harmful alcohol and other drug use is a major risk factor for domestic and family violence.

"The alcohol and drug sector is expert in behavior change, and ACT services work with over 500 women, men, children and families each day who are at risk of violence.

"Specialist alcohol and drug services are unique settings to concurrently prevent, intervene early and respond to people already experiencing domestic and family violence.

"Funding from the Safer Families levy enabled the ACT alcohol and drug sector to lead the nation in developing evidence-based, fit-for-purpose and feasible responses to domestic and family violence.

"These Australian-first tools provide clinical and practice guidance, benchmarking, role delineation and evaluation of existing and new responses to domestic and family violence in alcohol and other drug settings.

"The ACT Government should be applauded for its ground-breaking approach to policy development, where the alcohol and drug sector was directly funded to determine how best to respond in partnership with the domestic violence sector," said Ms Fowlie.

Minister Fitzharris said family violence is never acceptable in the Canberra community.

"The ACT Government recognises the urgency to tackle the issue of domestic violence and has committed \$21.42 million over four years through our Safer Families package – the largest ACT Government commitment ever – to address family violence.

"The ACT Government is determined to deliver more services in new ways to bring family violence out of the shadows and ensure those who need help get it.

"Our investment of over \$2 million to increase the capacity of specialist alcohol and drug services to deliver programs that integrate best practice in addressing family violence is an important component of the Safer Families package and the release of the ATODA toolkit today is an important first step," said Minister Fitzharris.

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The Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence Yvette Berry, said the insights we have gathered through the Family Safety Hub Co-Design tell us that we need to build the capability of the whole service system to identify and respond to domestic and family violence.

“This project, which was funded as part of the Safer Families package, will make an important contribution to building this capability for the alcohol and drug sector,” Minister Berry said.

“It is important that the tools ATODA launched today were developed closely with the alcohol and other drug sector through a co-design process.”

The Ministers also congratulated the ACT alcohol and other drug sector for its work and acknowledged the important contribution it can make to a safer Canberra.

Ms Fowlie said a key factor for success was the ACT Government empowering the alcohol and drug sector to use their expertise to make a fit for purpose and system-wide plan for change, rather than taking a top-down approach.

“The domestic and family violence sector generously gave their time and expertise in every step of the process - a remarkable contribution from a sector already stretched to meet demand.

“The AOD Safer Families Program in 2017 set the platform for long-term sustainable change and continued leadership from the ACT in improving the safety and health of all Canberrans,” Ms Fowlie said.

The AOD Safer Families Program was recognised with an ACT Violence Prevention Award in 2017.

Statement ends

Media contact: Carrie Fowlie 0406 585 020

Launch Program

10:30am: Arrival and networking

10:45am: Event begins

Speakers include:

- Mrs Agnes Shea OAM, Welcome to Country
- Professor Nicole Lee, 360edge – Expert clinical consultant
- Ms Jo Wood, Coordinator-General for Family Safety
- Ms Carrie Fowlie, CEO, ATODA

11:30am: Launch by Ms Yvette Berry, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence and Ms Meegan Fitzharris MLA, Minister for Health and Wellbeing.

12pm: Close

Venue: Reception Room, ACT Legislative Assembly, London Circuit, Canberra City