

Loss of peak body will leave huge gap in services to the community

The sudden and unexpected de-funding of the Alcohol and other Drugs Council of Australia (ADCA) will leave a huge gap in the provision of services to the community.

The Board of Management of the Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association (ATCA), joined with hundreds of others across Australia today in voicing dismay at the Government's decision, which was announced to the sector on Tuesday morning.

Dr Lynne Magor-Blatch, Executive Officer of the ATCA said today, "ADCA has for the past 50 years played a vital role, not only in the alcohol and other drugs sector, but across the community. In addition to its role as peak body, ADCA provides services and support both nationally and internationally."

The National Drugs Sector Information Service (NDSIS), which is one of ADCA's key services, is considered to hold the most comprehensive drug database, journal and DVD holdings, and other resources in the world. This includes the Register of Drug and Alcohol Research (RADAR), which contains up-to-date records of current and recently completed research projects, and Drugfields, which includes professional development, policy and practice information for the sector.

Dr Magor-Blatch added, "In addition to these valuable resources and services, ADCA manages and coordinates Drug Action Week, the annual awareness initiative which in 2013 included close to 950 activities and events across Australia aimed at raising awareness of alcohol and other drugs (AOD) issues.

The week also includes the National Drug and Alcohol Awards presentations, which encourage, recognise and celebrate achievements to prevent and reduce alcohol and other drug use

and harm in Australia. This includes awards for excellence in treatment and support, prevention and education, services for young people and in school drug education, law enforcement and media reporting. Funding for all these activities has gone.”

The awards presentation also includes the Prime Minister’s Award, which recognises an individual as having made a significant commitment and contribution to reducing the impact and negative effects of drug and alcohol use, and each year inducts two people into the National Drug and Alcohol Awards Honour Roll.

Alcohol and other drug issues impact on all our communities, and the ATCA’s members throughout Australia and New Zealand work with more than 34,000 people annually through residential therapeutic communities, prison-based drug treatment units, and a range of community-based services, many aimed at family support and reunification.

Mr Barry Evans, ATCA Chair and Executive Director of The Buttery in Byron Bay added, “The loss of services and resources that are provided by ADCA will cause an enormous gap, both in the alcohol and other drugs treatment sector and to the wider community. The organisation has been an important part of the landscape for 50 years, and we lament the possible loss of the important services ADCA provides and the benefits the organisation offers the entire community.”

For further information:

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The ATCA acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of this country and its waters. We wish to pay our respect to Elders past and present and extend this to all Aboriginal people seeing this message.