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**Re: Preliminary ACT contributions to the development  
National Alcohol and Other Drug Workforce Development Strategy**

Dear Professor Roche

Thank you for your letter requesting preliminary contributions from the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA) towards the development of the National Alcohol and Other Drug Workforce Development Strategy (the Strategy).

We note that our contributions are general in nature and have involved limited consultations with the ATODA membership and the ACT ATOD sector. We understand that there will be a public consultation process to inform the development of the final Strategy, and therefore will provide a secondary opportunity for ACT, and other stakeholders, to contribute.

As per your request, we have summarised some ACT preliminary information related to the following areas:

- AOD workforce development frameworks and policies
- Mechanisms to develop non-specialist workers from health, welfare, law enforcement and correctional agencies
- Availability and adequacy of education and training programs
- Recruitment, retention and workforce wellbeing strategies
- Current minimum qualification standards
- Clinical supervision, mentoring and support for workers and supervisors
- Knowledge transfer, research dissemination and evidence-based practice implementation strategies
- Career structures, remuneration scales and opportunities for professional and career development
- The current status of service and worker accreditation
- Clinical standards and quality assurance mechanisms

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you would like further information on the items listed in the attachment below.

Yours sincerely,

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## **Attachment 1: Preliminary ACT contributions to the development National AOD Workforce Development Strategy**

### **1. AOD Workforce Development Frameworks and Policies**

There are a range of policy documents that incorporate information on workforce development priorities for the ACT ATOD sector including:

- *ACT Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Strategy 2010 - 2014* - see pg 36 – 38 in <http://www.health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=dlpubpoldoc&document=1967>. Some priorities include supporting consumer participation, service accreditation, profiling the workforce, culturally appropriate services, etc.
- *ACT Comorbidity Strategy* - see activities listed throughout <http://www.health.act.gov.au/publications-reports/alcohol-and-other-drug-reports/alcohol-tobacco-and-other-drugs>. Some priorities include cross-sectoral education and skills development (including certificate level training), partnerships, reciprocal placements, quality improvement, etc.
- *ACT ATOD Minimum Qualification Policy* (see description later in this document).

There are three key levels of governance, that on top of individuals and agencies, have a stake and role in ACT ATOD workforce development:

- ACT ATOD Strategy Evaluation Group (see the Strategy document that contains the Group's terms of reference at <http://www.health.act.gov.au/c/health?a=dlpubpoldoc&document=1967>)
- ACT ATOD Specialist Executive Group (see the Group's webpage and terms of reference at <http://www.atoda.org.au/about/about-atod-sector/act-atod-chief-executive-officersexecutive-directors-group/>)
- ACT ATOD Workers Group (see the Group's webpage and terms of reference at <http://www.atoda.org.au/about/about-atod-sector/workers-group/>)

### **2. Mechanisms to Develop Non-Specialist Workers from Health, Welfare, Law Enforcement and Correctional Agencies**

- ATODA, in partnership with the youth and mental health peaks, deliver fortnightly comorbidity bus tours to frontline workers from a range of sectors to visit ATOD and mental health services. For more information see <http://www.atoda.org.au/activities/comorbidity-bus-tour/>
- ATODA will be undertaking (commenced July 2013) an ATOD screening and brief intervention project with cross-sectoral services to better identify and respond to ATOD issues (including access to training and an ACT version of the eASSIST). 3 x services (mental health and homelessness) trained to date.
- ATODA will be undertaking (commenced July 2013) a project to support cross-sectoral services to implement workplace tobacco management policies (including access to tobacco training and screening, resources etc). This

builds on a previous pilot, the Workplace Tobacco Management Project. For more information, including the research report, see:

<http://www.atoda.org.au/projects/tobacco/>

- ATODA has a partnership with ACT Policing to coordinate the provision of accredited ATOD training, including units from the Certificate IV in AOD.
- ACT Corrective Services and the ACT Hepatitis Resource Centre are members of ATODA and represented on the ACT ATOD Workers Group. Their AOD program participates in core sector activities such as the ACT ATOD Services Directory ([www.directory.atoda.org.au](http://www.directory.atoda.org.au)), the MQS and other training and activities.

### **3. Availability and Adequacy of Education and Training Programs**

- Limited training specific to ATOD is available in the ACT, with many sessions being purchased from interstate providers (creating significant challenges with accessing high quality local training and substantially increased costs). Locally, the following is available:
  - Certificate IV in AOD from Canberra Institute of Technology (non-industry provider)
  - Certificate IV in AOD from Train4Life (non-industry provider)
  - Comorbidity 2 day training delivered by ACT Health.
- ATODA has also formalised an agreement with an interstate consultant to provide training in the ACT specific to ATOD information, harm reduction, screening and brief intervention (<http://www.atoda.org.au/projects/expert-customised-evidence-based-and-act-specific-atod-training-and-education/>)
- ATODA delivers an annual Conference, see: <http://www.atoda.org.au/activities/conference/>
- ATODA coordinates, on a needs and capacity basis, issue or topic specific training, such as Smoking Care Workshops (<http://www.cancercouncil.com.au/1245/reduce-risks/smoking-reduce-risks/tackling-tobacco/useful-information-and-resources/>)

### **4. Recruitment, retention and workforce wellbeing strategies**

In terms of health of the workforce:

- ATODA provides access to subsidised nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) to smokers who are ATOD, youth or mental health workers in the non-government, not for profit sector of the ACT and/or members of ATODA to help them manage their tobacco consumption and support quit attempts at no cost to the individual employee. For more information see <http://www.atoda.org.au/activities/nrt/>
- The specialist ACT ATOD services are jointly progressing priorities to ensure a comprehensive response to BBV prevention, management and treatment with a specific focus on hepatitis. This incorporates strategies for the workforce including offering all staff access to BBV testing and vaccinations for hep A & B. It is expected that the next undertaking of the ACT ATOD Workforce Qualification and Remuneration Profile will be able to map progress towards these priorities.

Discussions have also been held with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ATOD agencies and the ACT Government regarding establishing and supporting an ATOD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers network to identify what specific training, workforce, development and retention needs they might identify. This work is due to begin by the end of 2013.

## 5. Current minimum qualification standards

The ACT ATOD sector is currently in the process of implementing the MQS, which aims to ensure the development and maintenance of a competent and professional workforce. It also aims to ensure that all workers have a shared minimum knowledge and skill base. The current MQS policy states:

'In order to attain the minimum qualification in the ACT, ACT Government Health Directorate and community organisations funded by ACT Government Health Directorate to provide ATOD services will require staff to successfully complete:

1. A **current** First Aid qualification to a Senior / Level 2 standard.

**AND**

2. A qualification in ATOD or addiction studies which is equivalent to, or above, the Australian Qualifications Framework Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Drugs (CHC40408).

**OR**

3. A health, social, or behavioural science related tertiary qualification plus "4 Core Competencies":

- CHCAOD402A: Work effectively in the AOD sector
- CHCAOD406D: Work with clients who are intoxicated
- CHCAOD408A: Assess needs of clients with AOD issues
- CHCAOD411A: Provide interventions for clients with AOD issues'

Significant developments have occurred regarding the MQS over the past 18 months. This has included undertaking a range of pilot activities to explore how the Strategy can better ensure the maintenance of a qualified and professional workforce, and meet the needs of a diverse workforce. The particular focus has been on how to support workers and the sector to access industry provider training. For example, the training subsidised for ACT ATOD workers over the last 6 months includes:

- 4 Core Competencies (4 x 3 day blocks), Face to face by ReGen (industry provider)
- 4 Core Competencies (online), by Odyssey House (industry provider)
- Graduate Certificate in Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs through University of Queensland or Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre (both industry providers)
- Senior First Aid by St Johns Ambulance Service

For more information see <http://www.atoda.org.au/projects/mqs/>

Specific discussions are held between ATODA, as the coordinator of the MQS, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agencies and consumer organisation to seek to develop specific strategies and supports within the broader MQS framework.

## **6. Clinical supervision, mentoring and support for workers and supervisors**

- Currently developing a supernumerary placement model across mental health and ATOD sectors – partnership between peaks ATODA & MHCC ACT
- A session was held at the Annual ACT ATOD Sector Conference (June 2013) to consider the opportunities that exist to access supervision outside of the ACT (particularly where there are difficulties accessing local expertise) e.g. skype based clinical supervision. This presentation was provided by A/Professor Nicole Lee, NCETA and LeeJenn Consultants.
- CatholicCare have undertaken a literature review titled 'Implementing a Supervision Program'. While not ATOD specific, information from this process is being shared with the ACT ATOD sector. Discussions have taken place through the ACT Grant Recipients Network.

## **7. Knowledge transfer, research dissemination and evidence-based practice implementation strategies**

- A research eBulletin is produced by ATODA each month that features newly-published research findings and other research activities of particular relevance to ATOD and allied workers in the ACT. The Research eBulletin is a resource for keeping up-to-date with the evidence base underpinning our ATOD policy and practice. Its contents cover research on demand reduction, harm reduction and supply reduction; prevention, treatment and law enforcement. See <http://www.atoda.org.au/publications/research-summaries/> for more information.
- ATODA has a partnership with the National Drug Sector Information Services (NDSIS), ADCA to support and embed this service within the MQS and provides free membership for workers undertaking the MQS.
- An Annual ACT ATOD Sector Conference is hosted by ATODA each year, with a key role of supporting knowledge transfer. See <http://www.atoda.org.au/activities/conference/> for more information.
- Working towards building The Canberra Collaboration – which seeks to bring together the researchers with ATOD experience across the ACT to support networking and linkages with treatment and support services.
- Promoting service evaluation and clinical / research expertise to support service development, currently many services are conducting evaluations and engaged with interstate experts to support the development of their programs:
  - Such as the Implementing Expanded Naloxone Availability in the ACT Program - run by CAHMA – evaluation team from NDRI, Social Research & Evaluation, Burnet, Kirby Institute

- Expanding access to residential treatment for people on pharmacotherapies project – run by Karralika, evaluated by LeeJenn
  - Re-developing the women’s AOD program, including a day program – run by Toora Women Inc with support from LeeJenn
  - Developing a day program – run by Directions with support from LeeJenn
- ATODA has a partnership with Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia (DASSA) to adapt the eASSIST into an ACT version which incorporates ACT referral point and links with the ACT ATOD Services Directory.
  - There are also project based activities that support knowledge transfer or build evidence based practice strategies such as:
    - Developing and endorsing (by all agencies represented on the ACT ATOD Executive Directors Group) a paper titled *Screening for substance use and related issues by specialist ATOD treatment and support services in the ACT*. This included endorsing an evidence based model related to screening practices across a range of priority areas.
    - Undertaking a pilot project across specialist ACT ATOD services regarding the utilisation of an ACT version of the electronic ASSIST (screening tool) – Including the implementation of an evaluation protocol developed by David McDonald, Social Research and Evaluation.

## **8. Career structures, remuneration scales and opportunities for professional and career development**

- ATODA, in partnership with all ACT Health funded specialist services undertakes a workforce profile of the entire specialist ACT ATOD workforce each 18 months. The most recent profile is available at <http://www.atoda.org.au/projects/workforce-profile/>. It summarizes remuneration levels, professional development and career pathways of workers.
- ACT Government has agreed to implement the Equal Remuneration Order
- The Department of Health and Ageing has funded the Equal Remuneration Order for ATOD services in the ACT.

## **9. The current status of service and worker accreditation**

- All specialist ACT ATOD services are now accredited (a requirement of ACT Health funding arrangements). This is also an action in the *ACT Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Strategy 2010 – 2014*.
- Re: workers accreditation see MQS – noting that professionals within this also need to personally maintain their accreditation (e.g. nurses, psychologists, social workers)

## **10. Clinical standards and quality assurance mechanisms**

- Policy agreed to and endorsed by all ACT Health funded specialist ATOD services to utilise the Guide to Developing Written ATOD materials (quality assurance of resources). See <http://www.atoda.org.au/activities/guide/>
- Policy that all ACT Health funded specialist ATOD services are not to deliver alcohol and drug education in schools from year 10 and below.
- ATODA has formed a partnership with the ACT Council of Social Service and specialist ACT ATOD services to improve cultural competency and the cultural security of ATOD practice in the ACT. See <http://www.atoda.org.au/projects/act-atod-sector-reconciliation-working-group/> for more information. Building on this, ATODA has also recently established a partnership with WANADA to support ACT agencies to engage with *Standard on Culturally Secure Practice (AOD Sector)*.
- There are a range of groups in the ACT that have a role in overseeing or monitoring quality assurance mechanisms in the ACT ATOD sector. This includes:
  - The ACT ATOD Workers Group
  - The ACT ATOD Executive Directors Group
  - The ACT Grant Recipients Network (agencies funded through the Substance Misuse Service Delivery Grant Fund and Non-Government Organisation Treatment Grants Program)