

It is hard to find a family in Australia that does not have at least one member with a significant alcohol and drug problem.

Alcohol and drug problems result in substantial costs to the community including deaths, disability, crime and financial costs.

Like most other countries, Australia struggles to prevent and provide adequate treatment for alcohol and drug problems.

Non government organisations make an important contribution to the community's response.

For half a century, ADCA has played a most important role in Australia as the mortar between the bricks.

The recent decision by the Federal government to terminate the funding of ADCA, effective immediately, is not just health vandalism, but also short sighted from a social and economic perspective.

For a new government which came to power stressing the importance of trust, and which had promised before the election to continue funding ADCA, this is a clear breach of trust.

This is a new government which also came to power stressing the importance of careful control of government expenditure. Yet before long the community learned that MPs, Ministers and the Prime Minister had used government funds to pay for their personal travel to weddings, football matches and even inspection of an investment property. The government was very slow to respond to the growing community concerns and when the response eventually emerged, it was very minimal.

Governments can close organisations like ADCA in minutes. But it takes many years and much more money to recreate what has been lost.

Ian Webster's comments on this decision are very powerful and very telling.

Let's hope that the government has the courage to admit it made a mistake and reverse this decision.

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