



*The leading voice in Indigenous drug and alcohol policy advice*

## **National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Committee**

### **APRIL MEETING COMMUNIQUÉ 2014**

As part of its commitment to provide high level advice to government, the Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD), with the support of the Australian Government, established the National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Committee (NIDAC).

**NIDAC comprises of members from non-government and government organisations with specialist expertise and knowledge from around Australia to provide advice to government on ways to address harmful alcohol and other drug (AOD) use among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Information about NIDAC and its Members can be accessed at: [NIDAC](#).**

Committee meetings and targeted consultations with peak bodies and key stakeholders involved in addressing the harmful effects of AOD use among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are held in a different State or Territory every four months. Through these meetings and consultations, NIDAC is able to ensure that the views of the sector are considered as part of its advice.

In March 2014, NIDAC:

- ❖ Conducted a consultation in Melbourne with representatives from the Telkaya Network; the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO); and the Victorian Alcohol & Drug Association (VAADA); and
- ❖ Conducted its regular Executive and Member's meeting.

#### **NIDAC Consultation**

Telkaya, VACCHO and VADDA, raised a number of matters with NIDAC Members. These included:

- ❖ Government reforms currently taking place in Victoria and the potential impacts on the provision of culturally safe and competent AOD services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- ❖ Concern over the 'law and order' approach being instigated in Victoria, including the increase in prison beds and the impact this will potentially have on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people coupled with the loss of Aboriginal AOD specific positions within the Koori Courts.
- ❖ Commitment by VACCHO to collect their own data to address identified gaps in AOD specific data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- ❖ Need for further strengthening of links between mainstream services and Aboriginal Medical Services (AMS).
- ❖ Continuing issues with the retention of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce due to low wages and insufficient career pathways.
- ❖ Work being undertaken to provide better supports and education for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AOD workforce, including the development of resources.
- ❖ Importance of good support for Koori workers in mainstream services to ensure the success of these positions.

## NIDAC Meeting

NIDAC discussed a number of matters at its meetings. These included:

- An update on the draft National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Drug Strategy currently being considered by the IGCD working group.
- The NIDAC/NACCHO consultation survey that is currently being conducted on the use of amphetamine type substance use (ice) by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who are accessing AOD and related services. This survey closes at midnight on Friday, April 11, 2014 and can be accessed at: [NIDAC](#).
- NIDAC's involvement in the next stage of the Indigenous adaptation to the mainstream clinical care packages developed under the IGCD's National Drug and Alcohol Clinical Care & Prevention (DA-CCP). This work is being conducted by DPMP and is due to be completed by the end of 2014.
- A recent meeting with the Chair of the Prime Ministers Indigenous Advisory Council and provision of advice from NIDAC to this Council on a range of AOD related issues.
- NIDAC's continuing work to establish a professional body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AOD workers in preparation for an inaugural meeting of the body at the 2014 NIDAC Conference.
- NIDAC's submission to the House of Representatives Inquiry into the harmful use of alcohol in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- An update from the NIDAC Conference Committee on the next NIDAC Conference being held from 4 – 6 June, 2014 in Melbourne. The support that NIDAC has received from a number of organisations towards sponsorship was gratefully acknowledged by Members. A call for nominations for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AOD awards is currently being held with nominations closing at midnight on Monday, 20 April 2014. Information about the Conference and the Awards can be accessed at: [NIDAC Conference](#).
- NIDAC's involvement in the newly formed National Justice Coalition initiated by the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS).
- Presentation from the Productivity Commission on their report, *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage*. Issues discussed with the Commission included the potential misuse of justice and prison costs associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in expenditure per person comparisons to general population and the recommended inclusion of FASD indicators in the report.
- An update on NIDAC's involvement on the National Health Leadership Forum, the Close the Gap Steering Committee, National Justice Coalition and the NSW Justice Reinvestment Campaign Group.
- A comprehensive update and discussion with representatives of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

## Next Meeting – TBA

For information on Indigenous specific alcohol and other drug issues, NIDAC priorities and activities – visit [www.nidac.org.au](http://www.nidac.org.au)

To contact the NIDAC Secretariat (02) 6166 9600 or email [nidac@ancd.org.au](mailto:nidac@ancd.org.au)

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