


Communique - August 2010

The Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) is the principal advisory body to the Government on drug and alcohol policy and plays a critical role in ensuring the voice of the many sectors involved, as well as the community, is heard in relation to drug and alcohol related policies and strategies. 

The ANCD consists of representatives from the non government and government drug and alcohol and related sectors (treatment, research, law enforcement, education etc) from around Australia.

Council meetings and consultations with people working with drug and alcohol issues are held in a different State or Territory throughout the year.

In August 2010, the ANCD Council met in Sydney where it:

- Held a consultation forum with people from agencies working with drug and alcohol related matters which included informative presentations from Mr Andrew Putt (NSW Health Department), Mr Larry Pierce (NADA), and Mr Gino Vumbaca (ANCD);
- Conducted its regular meeting and received presentations from:
 - Mr Gary Lewis, Regional Representative for East Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) & Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade Representatives;
 - The Narcotics Anonymous (NA) Public Relations Committee.

ANCD Consultation Forum:

The consultation forum was attended by over 70 people with a number of issues being raised for discussion and debate. Specifically these issues included:

- The importance of providing greater opportunities for Indigenous people to access mainstream services and community controlled health organisations;
- Supporting capacity building on drug and alcohol issues in community controlled health organisations;
- The importance of ensuring that the AOD sector is an integral part of the wider health reforms being discussed and planned;
- Concern about the role of the MCDS and IGCD diminishing in setting national policy;
- The potential benefits from the introduction of an E-Health system, but with a need for consultation with the AOD sector to ensure a good understanding of privacy protection for clients;
- The need to recognise AOD treatment as a specialist service;
- Support for substantially increasing the number of Indigenous traineeships available in AOD sector;
- The urgent need to significantly cut the red tape for NGOs, particularly in having to continually supply the same organisational information for every funding submission to government departments – which is consistent with the Productivity Commission Report on the Not-For-Profit Sector;
- Support for combining of NGO Treatment Grant Program funding with the funding being provided to address co-morbidity;
- The lack of infrastructure funding and support being made available to NGOs;
- Concern at an apparent change in NSW Government policy to now charge NGOs commercial rents;
- The gap in the data and data collection of women in the mid life stage demographic and therefore a potential lack of treatment services and options for these women experiencing alcohol problems;
- The role of early intervention and prevention programs and their potential place within the health reform

process;

- The lack of adequate training and accreditation for workers within the AOD sector;
- The need to provide incentives for experienced and well trained workers to stay within the AOD sector, and well as adopting strategies to have workers remain in rural and remote settings;
- The need for specialist and continuing training on AOD issues for Pharmacist and GPs;
- The need for continuing and better partnerships between the mental health and AOD sectors;
- The ability of Headspace centres to assist in AOD problems, as well as mental health issues affecting young people;
- The importance of Indigenous AOD services and the need for these services to be Indigenous controlled within the communities;
- The lack of any real funding from the Justice portfolios for AOD services;
- The need to better understand and address concerns about alcohol related brain injuries.

ANCD Meeting:

The ANCD discussed and debated a number of issues at its meeting which included:

- The importance of ensuring that the needs of people requiring drug and alcohol related services are appropriately considered and funded as part of the hospital based and primary health care reforms being undertaken by governments;
- An agreement to develop a comprehensive paper to advise the Federal Government on the role, contribution and needs of the AOD sector within the health reform process;
- Recognising the important contribution made by self help groups, particularly in providing ongoing support for people, especially after AOD treatment;
- A recognition that Australia has an obligation to assist and work with the region (Pacific and Asian) on AOD issues;
- The success of the ANCD collaboration with the Burnet Institute in establishing and expanding the work of the Pacific Drug & Alcohol Research Network throughout the Pacific Region;
- Welcoming the news from Hobart City Council taking the lead in the banning of smoking within public malls in the city of Hobart and the release of the document *Building on our Strength*;
- Recognising the success of the recent NIDAC Conference in Adelaide *Listening, Learning and Leading*.

Further information can on the work and activities can be located at the ANCD websites:

[Australian National Council on Drugs](#)

[National Indigenous Drug & Alcohol Committee](#)

[Of Substance](#)

[Asia Pacific Drug Issues Committee](#)

[Jobs of Substance](#)

[Positive Stories](#)

[Homeless Information Portal](#)

For any further details contact the ANCD Secretariat on ancd@ancd.org.au or (02) 6166 9600