



“the leading voice in Indigenous drug and alcohol policy advice”

**NATIONAL INDIGENOUS DRUG AND ALCOHOL COMMITTEE
MEDIA RELEASE**

**Melbourne to host the 3rd National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol
Conference – which gets under way tomorrow**

The theme of the Conference is *What works: Doing it our way*. It will be held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, Melbourne from 4 – 6 June.

The National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Committee (NIDAC), which is a committee of the Australian National Council on Drugs has organised the Conference that will see hundreds of experts gathering for the only national conference on drug and alcohol issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The NIDAC Chair, Associate Professor Ted Wilkes said, *“This is a very important Conference for our sector because it is the only national conference run by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that brings together leading experts and practitioners to discuss and share information on addressing the harmful use of alcohol and other drugs amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is quite simply a significant public health issue that incurs a major social and economic cost to individuals, families, communities and the nation.”*

Following on from the first two National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Conferences, the 3rd National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Conference aims to highlight approaches that are working to reduce the harmful effects of alcohol and other drugs and its associated harms among Indigenous Australians.

This Conference is featuring three main topic areas:

- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder
- Workforce issues
- Justice Reinvestment

For each of these topics there is a keynote speaker, a panel session and topic related presentations.

It also provides presentations on how different approaches are working in the areas of:

- Practice
- Specific drug types including tobacco, cannabis, and amphetamine type stimulants
- Youth
- Sport
- Complimentary interventions
- Blood borne viruses
- Justice

Keynote speakers include **June Oscar** who is the Chief Executive of the Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre in Fitzroy Crossing, WA - she has been instrumental in pushing for increased capabilities to diagnose and provide better services and support for people with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), where children suffer from varying degrees of brain damage when their mother drinks during pregnancy.

Steve Ella who is the NSW Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Traineeship Coordinator, Central Coast Local Health District - he is a mentor for the NSW Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Leadership group and previously lectured at Sydney University as an Adjunct lecturer.

The third keynote is **Commissioner Mick Gooda** who is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner at the Human Rights Commission - he has been actively involved in promoting justice reinvestment as a new solution to the problem of over representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the criminal justice system.

Professor Ngiare Brown who is the Executive Manager Research at NACCHO will be delivering the Noel Hayman Oration. She has made extensive contributions in research process, bioethics, policy, translation and practice within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and has worked over the past two decades to develop an extensive international network in Indigenous health and research.

NIDAC's position paper, *Alcohol and other drug treatment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples* will also be launched at the Conference. This paper was developed by NIDAC in response to a misperception that effective AOD treatment is not available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The paper sets out to allay these misperceptions by outlining who can benefit from receiving treatment; what treatment is known to work; key principles that should guide the application of treatment; and what treatment should consist of to be effective for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Winners of the National Indigenous Drug & Alcohol Awards will be announced at the Conference Dinner. Recipients of the awards will be recognised as having made an outstanding contribution to reducing the harms associated with alcohol and other drug use by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Full details on the Conference can be found at: www.nidaconference.com.au

National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Committee:

The National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Committee (NIDAC) was established in 2004 by the Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) to provide independent expert advice on addressing Indigenous drug and alcohol issues in Australia to the ANCD and Government.