

## National Council awards \$70,000 to rural and regional AOD workers

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In a practical demonstration of its commitment to workforce development in the alcohol and other drug (AOD) sector, the Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) today announced that it has awarded 19 study grants to AOD workers based in rural and regional areas. In total, the ANCD has awarded approximately \$70,000 to workers in areas such as Bathurst (NSW), Alice Springs (NT), Cairns (QLD), Devonport (TAS) and South Hedland (WA).

Major Brian Watters, Chairman of the ANCD, said, "Members of the ANCD regularly hear rural and regional AOD workers' concerns about workforce development. In particular, the cost of travel and limited funding means that these workers have difficulty accessing the range of professional development opportunities that are available. Consequently, many of these workers feel that they have less chance to gain new skills, as well as share ideas and experiences with their colleagues, especially those in major cities."

Major Watters stated, "As Chairman of the ANCD it makes me very proud to see that through strategies such as our study grants initiative, we can provide practical support to rural and regional workers who are at the frontline in terms of dealing with AOD issues in the community."

Mr Gino Vumbaca, Executive Officer of the ANCD, said, "This is the fourth round of the ANCD's study grants initiative and it has proven to be very popular with workers in the AOD and related sectors. Since the inception of the initiative, the ANCD has awarded approximately 80 study grants."

In conclusion, Major Watters said, "The ANCD's study grants initiative is designed to facilitate networking within the AOD and related sectors; provide workers with an opportunity to share work practices and experiences; and increase the collective knowledge and skills of workers in the sector. So, on behalf of the ANCD, I offer my congratulations to this year's study grant recipients and to those agencies that will host recipients, I want to thank you in advance for your participation in this worthwhile initiative."

For further information about the ANCD's Rural and Regional AOD Study Grants Initiative, please contact the Secretariat on 02 6279 1650.

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*The ANCD is the principal advisory body to Government on drug and alcohol issues.*

For further information, please contact:

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Mr Gino Vumbaca (Executive Officer)

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