

## National Drug Council welcomes alcohol onto the agenda

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The Australian National Council on Drugs (ANCD) has today welcomed funding from the Federal Government to design and disseminate materials to promote the newly released Australian Alcohol Guidelines to specific groups, including Indigenous people.

Major Brian Watters, Chairman of the ANCD said “Whilst the community debate often focuses on illicit drugs, the ANCD remains concerned at the level of social, health and economic damage inflicted on our communities from alcohol. Along with many members of the ANCD I have seen first hand the devastation wreaked by alcohol misuse in some Indigenous communities. So I am very pleased to see the Prime Minister and his government take such a practical interest in this issue.”

Members of the ANCD have discussed the Australian Alcohol Guidelines and have strongly supported the need to disseminate advice on low risk alcohol use and in particular, what is a ‘standard drink’. The Hon Trish Worth’s launch of materials for the general population was timely but we all agree that there is much to do to ensure people are able to understand how much alcohol they are consuming and the effects it has on their health and life.

Major Watters continued - “Specific communities require specific approaches to ensure the messages are appropriate and meaningful. For this reason, I am particularly pleased to see that the Alcohol Education and Rehabilitation Foundation has allocated \$1 million in small grants to assist communities to promote low risk drinking in ways that are appropriate for that community.”

“Given that the misuse of alcohol is a pressing issue for many Indigenous communities, it is important that the Australian Alcohol Guidelines are communicated in a culturally appropriate manner. Just as importantly, these materials need to be disseminated by an Indigenous organisation that understands the networks and best means by which to get the messages out there” Major Watters added.

In conclusion, Major Watters stated, “The Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council (ADAC) is rightfully recognised as a leading organisation in the provision of drug and alcohol related health information and advice to Indigenous communities, with almost ten years experience, and the ANCD welcomes its involvement as part of the partnership between the Federal Government and Alcohol Education & Rehabilitation Foundation in this area.”

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

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