



Media Release: ATODA Welcomes ACT Government's Increased Alcohol and Other Drug Investment

29 July 2022

The Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT (ATODA) welcomes the ACT Government's increased investment announced today of more than \$13 million through the 2022-23 Budget in additional support for alcohol and other drug treatment services.

This includes investment to:

- Support the delivery of residential rehabilitation services
- Deliver more targeted treatments for methamphetamine dependence
- Establish a new support service for families and carers of people who use drugs.

ATODA CEO, Dr Devin Bowles said: "It was a privilege to join the Minister for Health Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA this morning for this important announcement, which I warmly welcome. For people seeking residential or other specialised alcohol and other drug treatment, it will mean better access, and will allow more people to receive the right treatment at the right time. For families of people with drug dependence, it will mean better support, and increased education and capacity for them to support their loved ones."

Dr Bowles said "Today's investment is part of a pattern in which the ACT is leading Australia in the shift to appropriately recognising drugs as a health issue. This is illustrated by our nation-leading decriminalisation of cannabis, Australia's first fixed drug checking site pilot, and the Government's stated intention to decriminalise small amounts of a wide range of illicit drugs. The appropriate response to a health issue is to fund high quality health services. I thank the Minister for this investment, which will expand the ACT's scope of evidence-based alcohol and other drug services."

ATODA has advocated through the budget consultation process for increased investment in the alcohol and other drug sector. Across Australia, there is twice as much demand for alcohol and other drug treatment services as there are services available. Dr Bowles said, "In the ACT, the evidence is that we do better than the Australian average, but there is always more we can do and I look forward to continued productive discussions with Government."

Dr Bowles said: "The specialist alcohol and other drug sector in the ACT consistently delivers high quality outcomes for individuals, their families and the community. ATODA welcomes the Government's continuing commitment to work collaboratively with the alcohol and other drug sector in codesigning new initiatives."

For more information or comment, please contact Dr Devin Bowles, CEO, ATODA on 0413 435 080.

ATODA is the peak body for the alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector in the ACT. Its purpose is to lead and influence positive outcomes in policy, practice and research by providing collaborative leadership for intersectoral action on the social determinants of harmful drug use, and on societal responses to drug use and to people who use drugs. ATODA's vision is a healthy, well and safe ACT community with the lowest possible levels of alcohol, tobacco and other drug related harms.